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LUMEN CHRISTI

MEDITATIONS FOR EASTER-TIDE

BY

MOTHER ST. PAUL

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HOUSE OF RETREATS, BIRMINGHAM

AUTHOR OF
"SPONSA CHRISTI," "PASSIO CHRISTI," "MATER CHRISTI"
"DONA CHRISTI," "ORTUS CHRISTI"

PREFACE BY
REV. JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

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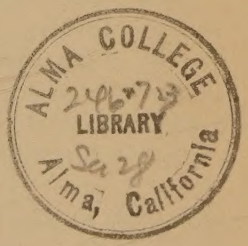

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PREFACE

THESE Meditations are doctrinal and practical. Practical, in the sense that they inculcate duty, but much more than that, they rise to the heights of counsel and generous love of our Divine Saviour, to the desire to do all I can for Christ, a fire that much needs kindling in the heart of priest and layman, of religious and secular. We are all so apt to seek salvation cheap.

Doctrine and practice should never be separated in Christian instruction. The practical side of conduct, when not strongly reinforced from the doctrinal side is apt to fall away into mere human and philosophic virtue, the virtue of the civilised man, of the gentleman, even of the pagan. On the other hand a sermon, or a meditation book, is not a treatise of theology; we are not qualifying for our D.D., when we are kneeling at our priedieu to pray!

Mother St. Paul here, as in her previous meditation books, admirably combines dogmatic truth with spiritual counsel and practical suggestion. A good meditation-book, this is also an excellent spiritual reading-book, especially for time of retreat. Any one who has had to do with retreats must know how scarce such books, really good of their kind, are in the English language.

Lumen Christi "the light of Christ" continues to shine out bright from the windows of the Birmingham House of Retreats.

JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

8th September, 1922.

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PRAYERS

This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoice therein.—(" Gradual " for Easter Week.)

O God, Who at the Paschal Festival didst give Thy saving remedies to the world; continue we beseech Thee, Thy heavenly gifts to Thy people; that they may both deserve to attain to perfect freedom, and advance onward to everlasting life.—(" Collect " for Easter Monday.)

May we be cleansed, O Lord, we beseech Thee from our old nature; and may Thy Sacrament, which we reverently take, change us into newness.—(" Postcommunion " for Easter Wednesday.)

Receive we beseech Thee, O Lord, the prayers of Thy people with the offering of sacrifices; that what we have begun at these Easter mysteries may by Thy power avail us for a healing remedy unto everlasting life.—(" Secret " for Easter Tuesday.)

Almighty and everlasting God, Who in the covenant of man's reconciliation didst order the mystery of Easter; give grace to our souls, that we may follow up by our deeds what we outwardly celebrate.—(" Collect " for Easter Saturday.)

Hear our prayers, O Lord, that the holy mysteries of our redemption may bring us help in this life, and also procure for us everlasting joys.—(" Postcommunion " for Easter Thursday.)

Vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, O Lord, ever to gladden us at these Easter mysteries, that the work of our renewal may abide and bring us to everlasting bliss.—(" Secret " for Easter Saturday).

Grant that we may enjoy His happiness in Heaven, the mysteries of whose light we have known upon earth. (" Collect " for the Midnight Mass.)

FIAT . . . . ALLELUIA.

LUMEN CHRISTI

Easter Day.

" O God Who hast bestowed on Thy faithful the fire of Thy brightness, by Thy Son Who is the Corner-stone, sanctify this new fire produced from the flint, that it may prove serviceable to us, and grant us so to be inflamed with heavenly desires through this Paschal solemnity, that we may be able to arrive with pure minds at the Festival of perpetual light." (1st Collect for the blessing of the new fire.)

1*st Prelude.* The Deacon singing *" Lumen Christi"* at the beginning of the Easter Festival.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace " to arrive at the Festival of perpetual light."

Point I.—Christ our Light

The Collect gives us the picture. As the new fire comes out of the flint, so the fire of God's brightness comes out of the Corner-stone, the Stone elect and precious, but which must be " struck by God " (Is. liii. 4.) before it can rise in the newness of life, to be the Light of the world.

The gladness of Easter begins with the blessing of the new light. For nearly a thousand years, the First Mass of Easter was said during the night preceding Easter Sunday, and the faithful kept strict vigil and fast till then. It was the greatest Vigil of the year ; the ceremonies began at 3 o'clock because the number of catechumens to be baptized was so great. Now we begin on Saturday morning outside the church with the blessing of the new fire and of the incense lighted from it. Then, as the procession enters the church, the Deacon, with all the clergy and people, kneels while one of the branches of the triple candle is lighted and then raising the new light on high he cries : *Lumen Christi,* and the joyful people answer :

Deo Gratias. Midway up the church a second branch is lighted and the Deacon sings again in a gladder tone : *Lumen Christi,* and the people answer as before. Once more, and this time on a still more joyful note, when the third branch is lighted as he reaches the altar steps, he says : *Lumen Christi,* and the people again answer : *Deo Gratias.* Then in the *Exsultet* he sings the praises of the Paschal Candle which is the symbol of Christ and is there to shew the glory of JESUS risen :—" *Let the earth be filled with joy,*" he cries, " *and let it be sensible that the darkness which overspread the whole world is chased away by the splendour of our Eternal King. Let our Mother, the Church be also glad, finding herself adorned with the rays of so great a light, and let this temple resound with the joyful acclamations of the people. Wherefore, beloved brethren, you who are now present at the admirable brightness of this holy light, I beseech you to invoke with me the mercy of Almighty God that He will, by the infusion of His light upon us, enable me to celebrate the praises of this Candle . . . This is the night of which it is written : And the night shall be as light as the day, and the night is my illumination in my delights.*" He then lights the candle with the new light, signifying the Resurrection when the soul of Christ was re-united to His Body. The symbol is now perfect and the Deacon continues his *Exsultet* : " *We beseech Thee O Lord that this Candle, consecrated to the honour of Thy Name may continue burning to dissipate the darkness of this night. And being accepted as a sweet-smelling savour may be united with the celestial lights. Let the morning star find it burning—I mean that Star which never sets, Who being returned from hell shone with brightness on mankind.*" And the Paschal Candle remains to give light not only through the long Vigil, but for all the forty days during which our Risen Lord remained on earth, ever reminding us that the Lord is risen as He said.

Such is the *Lumen Christi.* Let us have it before us all through our Easter Meditations ; and whenever we see the

Paschal Candle, the symbol of our Risen Lord, let us ask " to be inflamed with heavenly desires through this Paschal Solemnity, that we may be able to arrive with pure minds at the Festival of perpetual light."

Point II.—The Soul, the Body and the Blood

There were only thirty-three hours between the *Consummatum est* and the Resurrection Day. What has happened since we stood on Calvary with His Mother and watched Him die ? The Blessed *Soul* of Jesus has been to Limbo to say that the prison-days were over and that the Just might enter into their well-earned reward. The *Body* in the tomb has been carefully watched by Pilate's guards, but more carefully still by the angels. Death was there, but not as victor, for the Body no less than the Soul was never for a moment separated from the Divinity. And what about the Precious *Blood*, where has It been hidden ? There was *none* in the Body for every drop was shed, the spear of Longinus proved that. Where then was that precious redeeming Blood, to shed which was the whole purpose of the Incarnation ? It was scattered in profusion everywhere, as though It were of no account, or rather as though He who scattered It considered It as of no account, if only by It He might redeem the whole world. Let us go back in spirit to the spot where the Redeemer knelt at the beginning of His agony in the garden on Thursday night, the ground is sodden with His Blood ; let us go to the Pillar of Scourging—the ground, the pillar, the walls, the thongs, the clothes of the executioners—everything is splashed with the Precious Blood ; the crown of thorns, the scarlet cloak, the reed, the seamless robe, all tell the same tale. Let us go further, even to Calvary ; as we tread the way He trod we notice that the Praetorium steps and the streets along which He passed are all stained with His Blood, especially the stations where He stopped ; and when we arrive on Calvary's Hill where they crucified Him, it is

easy to find the spot because of the Blood ; and there, where for three hours He hung bleeding, there where His side was pierced—there on the ground we find the last drops of the Precious Blood. What is there to say about all this Blood spilt on the ground ? That wherever It was, there also was the Divinity ; that wherever It was, angels were carefully guarding and adoring It till the moment arrived when the Soul, the Body and the Blood were to be re-united.

Point III.—The Resurrection

As soon as the day of Light began, the blessed Soul of Jesus, attended by millions of angels and the Holy Souls, came to the Sepulchre to seek the Body, and we may imagine other angels bringing the Blood which they had guarded that the Body might be entire, for it would be like Him to avail Himself now of the ministry of angels, which He would not do during His Passion because the Scriptures had to be fulfilled. While the Holy Souls were looking at the Body and understanding what sin had done, all the wounds except the five were effaced, the Blood came back to the veins, the Soul of Jesus re-united Itself with the Body, and all adored the glorified Body of the Redeemer, of Him Who had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again. (St. John x. 18.) The Sepulchre was filled with a dazzling light—the *Lumen Christi*—but only for an instant, for He passed through the sealed stone and the sleeping guard just as He had passed from the womb of His Mother at His birth, leaving all through which He passed intact.

Then, and only then was the stone rolled away from the Sepulchre that all might see that it was empty and that He had risen " as He said." " An angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and coming rolled back the stone and sat upon it, ... and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men." (St. Matt. xxviii. 2–4.)

It is all joy to-day ; a wave of joy sweeps through Heaven, Earth, Limbo and Purgatory. Joy is the principal characteristic of Easter, and it is impossible to contemplate the joy of JESUS, of the angels, of the Just, without being inspired with a holy joy ; but have I any right to share the joy of these holy ones ? Yes, if I have tried to keep a good Lent. " If we suffer we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) I need not be afraid to rejoice ; the victories I have gained over sin, self, temptation are *His* not mine and He does not want a half-hearted joy over the victory any more than He wanted a half-hearted going into the battle, when He said to me at the beginning of Lent : " Behold, we go up." Prostrate then at His feet I will adore my Risen and glorified Lord with the angels, and when I think with sorrow of my short-comings I will look at the wounds in their dazzling beauty, precious signs of His love and forgiveness, kept there by Him to remind me what my redemption cost and what His love has done for me, and also to remind me that glory can only be reached through the cross.

Colloquy with my Risen Lord.

Resolution. To let my joy be unselfish—all for Him.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Lumen Christi ! Deo gratias ! "

Christ's Appearance to his Mother

Monday in Easter Week

" The voice of my Beloved, behold He cometh." (Cant. ii. 8.)

1*st Prelude.* Our Lady waiting for her Son.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to rejoice with JESUS risen.

Point I.—OUR LADY'S JOY

THE first mortal eye to see JESUS risen was, we cannot doubt, that of His own Mother. The Holy Souls who had accompanied Him to the Sepulchre, and the adoring angels understood the mystery far more nearly from God's point of view than could mortal man, but they could not see the beautiful Resurrection Body with a mortal eye. This first sight was reserved for His Mother. The Evangelists say nothing about their meeting, but that is very natural for there was nothing they could say, no one could recount what happened except Mary who ever kept her secrets for her King ; and why state a fact which all knew ? Our Lord revealed to St. Teresa that it was to His Blessed Mother that He appeared first after His Resurrection ; and St. Ignatius says that though the Gospel story says nothing about it, they must be " slow of heart " indeed to understand who could think that He appeared to anyone before her ! We will not then be among the slow of heart, but will range ourselves on the side of the Saints and of pious tradition, while we meditate on this first apparition—the glorious meeting of JESUS and His Blessed Mother.

Mary had been with her Son in spirit ever since she had left Him in the tomb. She had entered into the joy of the Holy Souls in Limbo when the Soul of JESUS went there with the glad news of the accomplishment of their Redemption, and all through the long Sabbath while His Body was resting

in the tomb she was consoling and encouraging His desolate Apostles, His joy was ever before her. Now, when at length the Sabbath was over, she did not go to the Sepulchre with the other women for she knew it was a fruitless errand. She stayed quietly waiting in her little Oratory.

As soon as the Angels and Saints and Holy Souls had adored the glorified risen Body of their Lord, they accompanied Him to His Mother whom they had so often desired to see. Some of them had seen her—Joachim and Anne, Simeon and Anna, St. John the Baptist and her own St. Joseph—the Angel Gabriel too, knew her well; but if she saw these, it was as if she saw them not, for at such a moment she could see "no man but JESUS only." "My Beloved to me and I to Him." The Saints tell us that a miracle was needed to keep Mary from dying of joy, as one had been needed to keep her from dying of grief during the Passion. How intense must have been the desire in the Heart of JESUS for this, the first moment of His Resurrection when He could console the sword-pierced heart of His Mother and make up to her for all that she had suffered, for and with and on account of Him. The Hearts of JESUS and Mary were one then in joy as they had been one in sorrow.

To all those whose watch-word through Lent has been: "In what place soever my Lord the King is, there will also Thy servant be," the King will bring joy; the watch-word has not changed but the circumstances and surroundings have; to be with the King in Lent meant the Cross, to be with Him at Easter means joy. "In what place soever" He chooses to go I, if I am His faithful servant, shall be there. Now He chooses joy and I must choose it too; but if my circumstances this Easter are such that joy is banished from my life and I seem doomed to eat the bread of sorrow, what then? How can a broken heart sing? By faith. The Easter joy is wholly supernatural, therefore natural joy or grief does not affect it. I am to be full of joy for my King's sake, because

I am with Him and He is full of joy. It is a matter of the *will*. As we have sought mortification and suffering and annihilation with our King during His Passion, so now we must seek joy with Him in His triumph. We must *make* ourselves joyful, just as we have to make ourselves indifferent, or patient, and if we cannot, then we must act as if we were ! This is St. Ignatius' advice, and anyone who has ever tried it knows how good it is. Let us force ourselves to be joyful for His sake, and we shall soon find joy creeping back into our lives, a supernatural joy, the only one worth having, because the only one that can last. " In what place soever,"—the King does not want to see one of His servants looking gloomy, sad, depressed and despondent, when He is coming back from the battlefield triumphant and victorious ! After all, we are created for joy, so joy is more natural to us than sorrow and suffering ; these are only accidents of our state as children of Adam. Let us then give ourselves up to joy and be in the spirit of Our Risen Lord, of His Blessed Mother and of Holy Church who uses for the Gradual every day during the Octave of Easter the words : " This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoice therein."

Point II.—Reasons for our Lady's Joy

(1) *Her Love.* Mary's love for Jesus was wholly unselfish and so she rejoiced in His joy wholly for His sake. Had she allowed herself to look at her own side of the question, her joy would have been clouded at once by the thought of the long years of exile and separation from her Son that awaited her ; but her love was too perfect to allow her to look at self. His joy was all she thought of.

If I loved Jesus more as Mary loved Him, I should have more joy in my life, for, though I cannot shut my eyes to the sorrows and difficulties of life, a true love for Him who permits them, would make me rejoice in His will. Let me examine myself and see whether, perchance, it is want of

love which is preventing joy from entering my heart. Easter joy is never selfish.

(2) *Her Suffering.* The fact that Mary had suffered much, made her able to rejoice much. She had entered more deeply into the sufferings of her Son than anyone else could do and as a consequence she could now enter more deeply into His joy. Capacity for joy is in proportion to capacity for suffering. What then must have been the capacity for joy of the Mother of Sorrows!

My Easter joy in Christ will be in proportion to my sufferings with and for Him. How glad this thought should make me, as I think of any little cross which I have carried faithfully after Him this Lent! The cross is over for Him, but not for me. I must still go on with the struggle, looking for the "joy that is set before me," and which is certainly not mine yet. And yet He gives me foretastes of that joy which is to be mine one day—little victories which are mine because my King has conquered: a conquest of self, a temptation resisted, a cheerful bearing of pain or fatigue, a little word that would have justified me in the eyes of others kept back, something given to Him that He particularly asked for during His Passion. Such little secrets known only to my King for Whom they are kept, bring their own joy and it is the joy of victory, it is real Easter joy, for it is all for Him, I need not be afraid of it, there is no room for self-satisfaction or self-congratulation, it is my King's victory, not mine, and He gives me a share in the joy of victory because I have had a share in the conflict.

Colloquy. O My Mother, help me to understand the true Easter joy and that it does not consist in freedom from trouble and care, but in union with JESUS. Teach me so to love and so to suffer that I may be able to rejoice with thee and thy Son.

Resolution. To rejoice to-day with JESUS rejoicing.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—(St. John xvi. 20.)

The Holy Women's Visit to the Sepulchre

Tuesday in Easter Week.

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen and Mary the Mother of James, and Salome brought sweet spices that coming they might anoint Jesus." (St. Mark xvi. 1.)

1*st Prelude.* The holy women walking along the dark, solitary road.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to persevere in spite of obstacles.

Point I.—On the Road to the Sepulchre

The holy women, who had ministered to Our Lord during His mission, were very anxious to anoint the Body for burial. There had been no time on Friday evening, all had been so hurried; Nicodemus with his hundred-pound weight of myrrh and aloes had hastily embalmed the Body, and the women had stayed at the Sepulchre after the others had gone, probably till the Great Sabbath began. Then, with His Mother and the Apostles, "they rested according to the commandment," (St. Luke xxiii, 56.) no doubt telling her who knew how vain would be their errand, that as soon as the Sabbath was over they were going to buy spices and ointment and take them to the Sepulchre. They were all members of the inner circle of His friends, Mary Magdalen, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Salome the mother of Zebedee's children, and St. Luke tells us there were "other women with them." (chap. xxiv. 10.) We remember them, it was they who on Calvary's Hill "stood afar off beholding," waiting in the background.

The time of anxiety was over now; it was the time for active service, "and when the Sabbath was past" they went and bought sweet spices, and by the time "it began to dawn towards the first day of the week" they were on their way to the Sepulchre. Loneliness and darkness and fatigue they

counted as nothing; their minds were fixed on their Master Whom they had left lying dead on the cold stone, for they had noticed particularly "how His Body was laid;" and had resolved to return at the first available moment. As they got nearer to the Sepulchre, they remembered the great stone which they had seen Joseph roll to its door, "and they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre?" This was a very real obstacle in their path, and one which might well have made them turn back and give up their task as hopeless; but love takes no account of obstacles, they were seeking their Master and they meant to find Him and minister to Him, nothing should hinder them, somehow or other all would come right and they would find Him. Though they had no faith in the Resurrection, they had great faith in their Master, so they simply asked the question and then pursued their journey as though there were no stone there.

Let me learn from these friends of my Master to be a little more patient about my difficulties and the obstacles that seem sometimes to lie across the path of duty. There are none too great to be overcome by love and trust, because JESUS will never leave to themselves those who bravely face difficulties for Him. In some way or other, if only we trust, the stone will be rolled away, the obstacle will be removed. It is quite permissible to see it and to talk about it, but never to let it deter us or turn us aside from anything we have undertaken for Him. The obstacle is there as a test of our love and trust and perseverance and determination. The holy women went on in spite of the stone.

Point II.—AT THE SEPULCHRE

By the time they arrived the sun was risen and the first thing they noticed about the Sepulchre was that the stone had been rolled back. After the Resurrection "an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and coming rolled back the stone

and sat upon it," showing triumphantly to the terrified guards that the Sepulchre was empty. "The guards were struck with terror and became as dead men" for "his countenance was as lightning and his raiment as snow."

As soon as Mary Magdalen saw that the stone had been removed, she seems to have jumped to the conclusion that the Body had been stolen by His enemies and to have fled back to Peter and John, who were probably at John's house, and said: "They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre and we know not where they have laid Him." (St. John xx. 1, 2.)

Now, the angel had left the stone and was sitting inside the Sepulchre on the right side, and this was the next sight for the holy women. As they entered "the angel answering said to them: Fear not for I know that you seek JESUS who was crucified." What the angel *answered* must have been their terrified looks, caused partly by the shock of finding an empty tomb, and partly by the sight of the angel. What a comfort it must have been to them to find that the angel knew all about them and what they had come for! "He is not here. He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid." In obedience to the angel's directions they looked carefully at the empty Sepulchre and understood that He had *risen*. Then the angel gave further directions: "Going quickly tell ye His disciples (*and Peter*, St. Mark adds) that He is risen. And behold He will go before you into Galilee (where He had predicted a formal re-union with the Church before He ascended. St. Mark xiv. 28.) There you shall see Him. Lo, I have foretold it to you."

The glad news of Easter was now theirs. All was very different from what they expected, they had brought spices and ointment to anoint the dead Body of the Master, they found that His Body was risen and living. They came out of darkness into dazzling, celestial brightness. They had had a commission about their Master given by an angel from

Heaven, and last and best the angel had promised that they should see Him in Galilee where they had so often ministered to His needs. "There you shall see Him." Their courage and fidelity and perseverance were well rewarded even now, for though they had not found what they expected, had not found their Master, they had found already far more than they anticipated.

It will be the same for all those who with courage and faith seek JESUS, that is seek to do His Will, in spite of difficulties which from a human point of view are insurmountable. They may not find just what they expected, their plans which they had prepared with such care may never be executed, but they will not be disappointed. Yea, they will find more than they ever dared to hope for. He will show His Will to them by the clearest possible directions and make them feel that there is a promise of more still to come. But to obtain this happy result the courage, faith and perseverance of the holy women are necessary.

Point III.—THE RETURN FROM THE SEPULCHRE

There is no lingering at the loved spot where their Lord had so recently lain, no waiting to question the angel about so many things that they must have wanted to know: "They went quickly with fear and much joy running to tell His disciples." How much is told in these few words! They started off at once, and in spite of the trembling and fear that seized them (St. Mark) they *ran* to tell the disciples the news. The state of trembling was natural; they were only women; they had probably been up all night; they were worn out with sorrow and anxiety; they had had a long walk in the dark, carrying heavy weights; they had been to the abode of the dead; they had seen "a vision of angels," and they had found the tomb empty! "They said nothing to any man" on the way, for "they were afraid," afraid to disclose their commission to any but those for whom it was

intended; but great though their fear was, there was something that was greater, and that was their *joy*, their "great joy." It was the Easter joy which always puts everything else into the shade. It was true that they had not found "the Body of the Lord JESUS," (St. Luke) true they had no idea where He was, but it was also true that He was *living*, for the angel had said: "Why seek you the living with the dead?" And he had also said distinctly: "He is not here, but is *risen*," and he had bidden them *remember* what JESUS had told them in Galilee about His Crucifixion and His Resurrection and they *had* remembered. No wonder their joy was great for not only had the Resurrection taken place but they believed in it. They appropriated the Easter joy. And so we must leave them "running in the way of His commandments" and little guessing how near He was to them.

Have I appropriated the Easter joy? This is quite distinct from believing in the Resurrection. To appropriate the Easter joy means to be able, like the holy women, to "run in the way of His commandments, "that is, to do His will, with cheerful alacrity, in spite of disappointments, thwarted plans, fatigue, difficulty, knowing that all is well, because "He is risen as He said," because He has conquered and I am one of His friends who has ministered to Him.

Colloquy with the holy women and with JESUS Risen.

Resolution. To let no difficulties to-day come between me and my Easter joy.

Spiritual Bouquet. "They found the stone rolled back."

Peter and John at the Sepulchre

Wednesday in Easter Week.

" Peter therefore went out and that other disciple : and they came to the Sepulchre." (St. John xx. 3.)

1*st Prelude.* John overtaking Peter as they ran to the Sepulchre.

2*nd Prelude.* An increase of faith and love.

Point I.—Mary Magdalen's Tidings

It was a spontaneous thought and a very natural one on the part of Mary Magdalen to go and tell Peter and John of the outrage that she suspected. She had not waited, as we have seen, to know anything about the angel and his message, all she knew was that the Sepulchre had been tampered with and the precious Body stolen. Knowing that, she could not stay with the other women, she must at once find someone who could render assistance. Her thoughts flew to St. Peter, *now* the head of the little band, and to St. John probably her favourite, because he was the special friend of Jesus and Mary, and because now too there was a fresh link between them—a link which would last through all eternity—for had they not spent three hours together, with the holy Mother, at the Foot of the Cross ? She knew that she would find them both in John's house, and it was not long, such was her haste, before she burst in upon them with the startling news : " They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre and we know not where they have laid Him."

Point II.—The Apostles' Discovery

With one thing only in their mind, namely that the Sacred Body had been stolen and that they must recover it, Peter and John started at once for the Sepulchre. " They both ran together," faith and love, but faith was at a very low ebb just now and love soon outstripped it and brought

St. John first to the Sepulchre. Of the Apostles he was the last at the cross and the first at the tomb on Easter Day. He stooped down and peered in; the angels had gone, the Sepulchre was empty and dark, but he could see the linen cloths. "Yet he went not in;" perhaps he was afraid, perhaps he thought it was more courteous to Peter to wait for him. Peter waited for nothing, he came running up and went straight in and noticed at once in what great order the linen cloths were arranged. *We* know the glorified Body of our Lord had passed through them without in any way disarranging them, just as it passed through the stone at the door of the Sepulchre; but Peter was face to face for the first time with the miracle. There was no appearance here of the Body being stolen, the linen cloths would have been taken too, or, if left, would have been thrown down hastily in no sort of order. Then John went in too, and "he saw and believed." They could not do otherwise, there was no angel to tell them that He had risen as there had been for the holy women, but the evidence of the Holy Shroud was irresistible and made them recall the words that they had so often heard from the Master's lips: "On the third day He will rise again." There was no need now to look for the Body as they had intended; they departed therefore "again to their home." St. Luke says: they went away "wondering at that which was come to pass."

Gradually the Easter light—the *Lumen Christi*—was gaining ground. The Holy Mother had always had it, she always knew, such was her union with her Son, that He would rise again; it had dawned upon the holy women through the angel's voice and sent them on their way rejoicing; and now it has illumined the hearts of Peter and John, changing the feeble light of faith into a strong, steady flame that will never again flicker, and making the love burn in their hearts as they thought of their Beloved Master Who had risen as He said He would.

Thus were Peter and John rewarded for their courage, for it would have been far safer for them while the enemies of JESUS were so active, to have remained behind the fast closed doors with the rest of the disciples. Instead of spending a miserable Easter Day in doubt and fear, they knew very early in the morning that He had risen and were able to rejoice with the Holy Mother. They could not rejoice with the others for these treated all the stories they heard as "idle tales."

Point III.—THE APOSTLES' WONDER

Now, Peter and John are on the way home and they are "wondering at that which has come to pass." What was the cause of this wonder ?

(1) The *stupendous miracle.* They had seen their Master raise Jairus' daughter to life again soon after her death ; they had seen Him raise the widow of Naim's son as he was being carried to the grave ; they had heard Him call forth Lazarus from the grave ; after he had been buried four days ; they knew that He was the Master of death ; but now they were face to face with a much more wonderful miracle than any of these. He had Himself risen again by His own power ! And the Apostles' faith in His Godhead was confirmed.

(2) Perhaps they wondered *where He was.* They probably had no thought of His Body being glorified as they had seen it on the Mount of Transfiguration, and thought that He would come back to His old life again and live amongst them as Lazarus had done. They may have wondered whether they should find Him at home with His Mother when they got back, for their minds were still very hazy, though the fact of the Resurrection was clear to them.

(3) Did *their own strange unbelief* form one of the reasons for their wonder ? It may well have been so. He had spoken often to them, and so clearly, of His sufferings and death, of

the betrayal, the spitting, the scourging, the crucifixion, and all *these* things had come true just as He said, why then had they not believed that what He had said about His Resurrection would come true too? We are told that JESUS "wondered" once at the unbelief of His own people at Nazareth. (St. Mark vi. 6.)

This is a meditation which it is impossible to make without personal applications and questionings presenting themselves at almost every step :—

(1) Do I run for help as did Magdalen to the friends of JESUS and Mary, feeling sure that those who can help me most are those whose lives are the most closely bound up with theirs, whose union with them is the closest? This seems an elementary question—and yet if I search my heart sincerely I shall find, perhaps, that it is not always from this point of view that I choose my friends and advisers. Am I not a little inclined to run to those for whom I have and from whom I receive the most affection and sympathy, a little inclined to leave the supernatural out of the question, and thus to allow myself be influenced by those who are out of touch with JESUS and Mary?

(2) What about my faith this Easter? I believe in the Resurrection—yes, but the Resurrection proved that He was God and could do all things, and that He does what He says He will. Have I sufficient faith to believe this? In theory yes, but what about the practice in my own every-day life? He *can* do everything and He *will* do all that He has promised. Is not that enough? Why then these miseries, these doubts and fears and uncertainties? Why, when difficulties cross my path, do I at once jump to the conclusion that my Lord has been stolen away from me? Because my love does not outstrip my faith. It was when love entered the Sepulchre that faith was made perfect. But the tried soul answers: I do not doubt *Him* but myself. A greater love for Him will remove even doubt of self, for self will be lost in Him and if

self is lost there is no self to doubt; but self must be given *entirely*, nothing kept back, true love cannot keep back, it is an impossibility; this is the kind of love that outstrips faith, and in the end will melt faith into sight.

(3) Have I not cause to wonder sometimes at my want of faith, want of trust and confidence in Him Who has promised me such good things? Let me remember that it is possible for JESUS to wonder at the unbelief of His own people. I do not want to give Him cause to wonder about me this Easter.

Colloquy with JESUS risen, asking that the *Lumen Christi* may so illumine my soul that love may keep faith up to the mark and prevent me from ever doubting His word.

Resolution. To show Him to-day that love reigns supreme.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Then that other disciple also went in—and he saw and believed."

The Appearance to Mary Magdalen

Thursday in Easter Week.

"Have you seen Him Whom my soul loveth? I adjure you, if you find my Beloved, that you tell Him that I languish with love." (Cant. iii. 3 and v. 8.)

1*st Prelude.* Mary Magdalen turning to speak to the gardener. (The "Gospel" for to-day.)

2*nd Prelude.* To keep my love strong in times of desolation.

Point I.—MAGDALEN'S DESOLATION

When she saw Peter and John running off to the Sepulchre she too directed her weary steps thither. Where else was there to go? It was the spot dearest to her on earth; so, tired and sad and almost hopeless though she was, she started again. After all, she thought, Peter and John may have heard

something which will give some clue as to the whereabouts of the Body; but in any case she could not keep away. When she arrived she had not even the consolation of speaking to Peter and John and hearing what they thought, for they had already "departed again to their home; but Mary stood without at the Sepulchre weeping"; it was all so terribly desolate, so lonely, so sad, she felt so friendless, so helpless, she had done all she could, had spent herself in the service of Him Whom her soul loved, she had come to the end of her resources, her courage and hope and energy failed her and she let her tears fall as they would.

Mary was quite in the dark because the *Lumen Christi* had not yet risen in her soul, it was the light of faith that was wanting, faith in her Master's words and faith in the Resurrection; but her love was true and loyal. It was not her fault that all was dark and desolate, she had spared neither money (for we may be sure she bought the very best spices and the most costly ointment that were to be had) nor time, nor strength. She had used all her intelligence and all her energy to find her Lord, and it was not till she had done all she could think of, that she rested for a moment and allowed herself to weep; and even then she did not sit down under her sorrow, she *stood* ready to do the next thing that occurred to her, and never for one moment did she take her thoughts off JESUS or have any other desire in her heart than that of finding Him.

From souls, who in desolation act thus, consolation is not far.

Point II.—MAGDALEN'S CONSOLATION

"Now as she was weeping, she stooped down and looked into the Sepulchre." She had not done this before, she had not had time, but now she felt that she could get a little closer, could look at the precious spot where His Body had lain and where she had last seen Him. "And she saw two

angels in white, sitting one at the head and one at the feet where the Body of JESUS had been laid." It was not so dark and desolate as she expected, a heavenly light was there ; the vision was a very beautiful one, but it could not satisfy Magdalen's empty, aching heart. The angels had heard her heart-broken sobs outside the Sepulchre and they were ready with their tender question : " Woman why weepest thou ? " She was not the least abashed, angels had no power to turn her thoughts from her Lord, and they were of no use to her unless they could find Him for her ; so she answered quite simply : " Because they have taken away my Lord ; and I know not where they have laid Him."

Desolate, sad and dark though Magdalen's heart was, yet what music it was making in the Heart of JESUS so close to her all the time, because of its intense love ; *nothing* had power to turn her thoughts from Him or to make her cease seeking Him. When shall I realize how much joy times of desolation are capable of giving to the Heart of JESUS ! When I do, the pain they cause my heart will be greatly eased. Magdalen neither saw, nor understood, nor believed—just the three things that trouble the soul in desolation : I cannot see Him, I cannot understand His dealings, I cannot sensibly exercise the faith that is mine—but she *loved*, and love covers a multitude of sins ; a soul which loves cannot be displeasing to JESUS ; on the contrary it is so attractive to Him that He cannot keep away from it, though to the soul, on account of its want of active faith, He seems to be " a God afar off."

When Magdalen had given her simple answer to the angels, feeling in herself that they were powerless to help her (none can really help the desolate soul but Christ Himself) she turned away from them, " and saw JESUS standing : and she knew not that it was JESUS." She was looking for His dead Body, her one thought was whom she could ask next about it, and when she saw a man standing near, it was just

what she wanted. Her eyes, dim with weeping and now dazzled by the celestial light in the tomb, could not all at once accommodate themselves to the dim, grey, morning light outside, so it was most natural that she should not recognize JESUS. "JESUS saith to her: Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" His speaking to her first, made all easy, and "she thinking it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." She had a little more hope now, the gardener seemed to know that she was looking for someone, and why should he ask her who it was if he did not know something about it, perhaps he had had some good reason for removing the Body, he may have put it in a safe place to hide it from His enemies. If it is thou who hast taken Him hence, tell me where He is and *I* will take Him away, I will keep Him safe, I would rather He was in my keeping. Oh! how strong is her love. She is ready to do the impossible if only she can get back her Lord. "JESUS saith to her: Mary! She turning said to Him: Rabboni!" (My Master!)

What a change! And all in a moment! The *Lumen Christi* has flooded her soul, and in a fuller way than it had any of the others except the Blessed Mother. It had brought belief in the Resurrection to the Apostles and the holy women, but to Mary Magdalen it brought also a sight of the Master Himself. "He appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom He had cast seven devils." (St. Mark xvi. 9.) Her past history did not matter to Our Lord. He picked her out and showed special favours to her because "she loved much." "She loved much" in Simon's house where she washed His feet with the tears of her contrition; "she loved much" as she knelt at those bleeding Feet for three hours on Calvary's Hill; "she loved much" at the Sepulchre on Easter morning; and now her love was rewarded. Once again she heard the familiar Voice call her by her name: "Mary," and all she

could answer was: "Rabboni!" (My Master!) It is impossible to add to the picture, it is complete. We can imagine something of what Magdalen's Easter joy must have been by our own consolation after a specially trying time of desolation; but what is this compared with the sight of the beautiful, glorified Body of Jesus which Magdalen now saw? She was down on her knees in a moment in her favourite place at His Feet. "JESUS saith to her: Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father," that is: Do not *cling* to Me now, do not depend too much on this consolation, you cannot always have it till you are with Me for ever—with My Father and your Father, My God and your God. As long as you are here on earth there will be many a time when you cannot see My Feet to embrace them, many times of desolation, but there never will be a time when you cannot embrace them by faith and love and so get consolation in the midst of desolation. "Go to my brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and to your God." Let them understand, that though My Body has been glorified and I am going to ascend into Heaven, they are still, far more than ever, My *brethren*, (He had never called them by this name before), for My Father to whom I am going is their Father too, My God is their God. Nothing is changed in our relationship."

How eagerly and joyfully Mary Magdalen must have gone back to take this beautiful message to the disciples! She found them "weeping and mourning" (Peter and John, of course, were not with them, they were rejoicing with the Holy Mother in John's home) and she said to them: "I have seen the Lord! and these things He said to me." She told them that He was *alive*—and not dead. It was a startling message, and one we should have thought they would at once have believed, but "they hearing that He was alive and had been seen by her, *did not believe*." It was not so much that they

would not believe as that they *could* not. The news was too good to be true.

Probably Mary Magdalen then went to John's home to tell him and Peter. Here as we know she would find more congenial society, those who already believed in His Resurrection and would therefore be more ready to believe that she had seen Him and to listen to the things He had said to her.

Let me listen again to those glad tidings. I have very real interest in them, for I am one of His *brethren*, His Father is my Father and His God is my God.

Colloquy with St. Mary Magdalen and with JESUS Risen.

Resolution. To remember what joy my times of desolation may give to the Heart of JESUS.

Spiritual Bouquet. "I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me."

The Appearance to the Holy Women

Friday in Easter Week.

"And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail! But they came and took hold of His feet and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see Me." (St. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.)

1*st Prelude.* The holy women being met by JESUS.
2*nd Prelude.* The grace of joy.

Point I.—AVETE! ALL HAIL!

We left the holy women in our Meditation on Easter Tuesday going back in silence but "with great joy" to tell the disciples that there was no need for spices and ointment

for the Master had risen. Since they left the Sepulchre, as we have seen, Peter and John have visited it, and Mary Magdalen has paid it a *second* visit and has been privileged in being the first of all the little band to see Him.

Great though their joy was there was a greater still in store for the holy women, before they arrived at their journey's end. Their hearts were full of silent wonder, of gratitude and of the joy that comes from believing. They were giving great joy to the Heart of JESUS. He was very near to them and was longing to give them the *full* Easter joy, of which His Mother and Mary Magdalen were already in possession. Suddenly the road was lit up with a brilliant light—the *Lumen Christi*—and they saw close to them a well-known figure and heard a well-known voice saying: "*Avete.*" (All Hail !) It was only one word—but it was enough. It was a word of joyous greeting—(The word in the Greek means also "Rejoice"), and it came from the Master's own lips—all must be well.

Easter joy—what are the things which lead up to it? *Fidelity* to duty; an earnest *seeking for Jesus*; *mortification*—going on in spite of fatigue; *courage*—going on in spite of the darkness and of the hostile guards; *perseverence*—going on in spite of the stone; *remembrance* of the words of JESUS; *faith* in his messengers; *obedience* to His commission; *silence*—"they said nothing to any man."

Let me apply these tests to myself. If my Easter joy is not very great, may it not be because these virtues are weak in me or even lacking altogether? It is not too late even now to put things straight. If my Lent has not been a good one, Satan is sure to be ready with the temptation to wait till next Lent and try to do better *then*. No, let me do better now—do *to-day*, the things I know I ought to do, so that there may be nothing between me and my Risen Lord, nothing to prevent His meeting me with His "All hail!" and flooding my soul with joy.

Point II.—Fear Not

"They came up and took hold of His Feet and adored Him." Naturally, their eyes being cast down, the first thing they would notice would be His Feet with the marks of the cruel nails still there. There was no room for doubt, it was their own Master Whom they had watched die on Good Friday; He had risen again by His own power and they *adored* Him as their God. He allowed them to have their fill of consolation and joy; it was a joy to Him to see them on their knees at His Feet, to receive their reverent embraces and to be worshipped as God by His dear friends who had hitherto been ignorant of His Divinity.

"Then Jesus said to them: Fear not." The realization for the first time of the Divinity of their Master was enough to make them fear. They knew now that they were in the presence of God himself, that they were kissing the Feet of their God, that it was really God Who had taken their human nature, Who had lived and worked amongst them, had died on the Cross and Who was close to them in His glorified Resurrection Body. They sorely needed the reassuring words of Jesus: "Fear not."

There was another reason, too, for their fear—the sight of the glorified Body. Nothing so beautiful had ever been seen by the eye of man. St. Teresa, who often had visions of the glorified Sacred Humanity, says: "I was extremely afraid at first and did nothing but weep; however when He spoke to me but one word to reassure me, I recovered myself and was as usual calm and comforted without any fear whatever . . . You will think that it required no great courage to look upon Hands and Face so beautiful; but so beautiful are glorified bodies that the glory which surrounds them renders those who see that which is so supernatural and beautiful, beside themselves. It was so with me; I was in such great fear, trouble and perplexity at the sight. Afterwards these caused

a sense of safety and certainty, together with other results, so that all fear passed immediately away . . . If in Heaven itself there were nothing else to delight our eyes but the great beauty of glorified bodies, that would be an excessive bliss, particularly the vision of the Humanity of JESUS Christ, Our Lord. If here below where His Majesty shows Himself to us according to the measure which our wretchedness can bear, it is so great, what must it be there where the fruition of it is complete!"[1]

Point III.—MY BRETHREN

When they are re-assured and are feeling nothing but the intense joy of having Him back again, He gives them something to do for Him. He is still going to allow them to minister to Him; joy is succeeding joy because JESUS has risen. "*Go tell My brethren.*" He uses the same tender word that He used to Magdalen. It was enough in itself to drive away all fear even if He had not told them not to fear, for it meant that He was still their Brother though they had found out at last that He was their God, still their Brother though the beautiful Resurrection Body seemed to make such a gulf between them. "I am the Lord, I change not."

"*That they go into Galilee.*" Tell them to go to *Galilee*—yet another joy, their homes were in Galilee, it was from Galilee, St. Matthew tells us, that "they had followed JESUS, ministering unto Him." (chap. xxvii. 55.) Galilee held many precious memories of walks and talks with their Master in so many of its towns and villages. He had been a familiar figure, healing their sick and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. His own city of Nazareth was in Galilee; there also were Cana, Naim, Magdala, Capharnaum, the river Jordan where He had been baptized, and the Sea of Galilee whence He had called His first Apostles. The angel in the

[1] *Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*, chaps. xxvii. and xxviii.

Sepulchre had mentioned Galilee too, and had bidden them remember how He had spoken to them there, but no voice had power like His to awaken tender memories, it was the voice of the Good Shepherd and the sheep knew it.

"*There they shall see Me.*" It was to be the meeting of the Shepherd with His little flock—of Christ with His Church, before He ascended; He had spoken of it on the day before His death: "After I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." (St. Mark xiv. 28.) That is what the angel referred to at the Sepulchre when He said to the holy women: "There you shall see Him, *as He told you.*" (chap. xvi. 7.)

All then is planned by our JESUS and it is the knowledge of this that brings Easter joy, even though Easter find us in the midst of sorrow. He plans the desolation as well as the consolation, and if we are full of love and trust, as were the holy women, in our times of darkness the *Lumen Christi* will come as He told us. "*There* shall you see Him," just *there* where all is dark and dreary, for in a moment He can flood all with the sunlight of His presence; and till He does, He is nevertheless there, the sun waiting behind the cloud. Let us remember all He has done for us, go back to the places we have been in together, recall the miracles of grace that He has worked for us, live over again the blessed moments when we felt so sure that the call was His, spend again long hours with Him and His Mother at Nazareth. We are sure to see Him where we have seen Him before—if not in the joy of consolation, yet most certainly in the safer trust and love of desolation. There they shall see Me—just there wherever I have appointed them to be. Could any Easter message be more consoling for the disciples—and for me?

"And going back from the Sepulchre they told these things to the Apostles; and these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them" (St. Luke xxiv. 9–11) although the holy women had brought a message straight from the lips of the Master and were able to tell

them that they had seen and touched His Risen Body ! A soul in desolation can only be consoled by JESUS Himself, no accounts however thrilling of what He has done for other souls, make any difference to its sorrow, except perhaps to increase it. Had the Apostles had the energy, love, faith and obedience of the holy women they would perhaps have seen their Master earlier in the day than they did. " They that in the morning *early* watch for Me, shall find Me." (Prov. viii. 17.)

Colloquy with the holy women and with JESUS Risen.

Resolution. To let nothing short of real Easter joy satisfy me.

Spiritual Bouquet. "All hail ! Fear not !"

The Appearance to Peter

Saturday in Easter Week.

" The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." (St. Luke xxiv. 34.)

1*st Prelude.* Peter walking about in Joseph's garden, hoping to see Our Lord.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace not to avoid Our Lord after a fall.

Point I.—PETER IN JOSEPH'S GARDEN

After Mary Magdalen's visit to John's house where she had told Peter and John that she had " seen the Lord," it was impossible for a restless spirit like St. Peter's to sit quietly in the house. His visit with John to the empty Sepulchre had already made him believe in the Resurrection of his Master and now Magdalen had said that she had seen Him and talked to Him. He knew Magdalen and he believed her ; but if *she* had seen Him, perhaps *he* might too ; she had seen

Him near the Sepulchre—he would go back there, there would be no harm in going, and there was just a chance. So we can picture him going back alone to the place where yesterday the Body of JESUS had lain, and walking about in Joseph's garden. The very spot is still shown where Our Lord appeared to him. Holy Scripture tells us nothing about this meeting beyond the bare fact that "He was seen by Cephas;" (1 Cor. xv. 5.) but we can gather that it must have taken place some time on Easter Day between His appearance to Mary Magdalen and the return in the evening of the two disciples who went to Emmaus and came back to find the others all gathered together again and saying: "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." Perhaps those who know something of the love of the tender Heart of JESUS may infer also from their own experience that He must have appeared early in the day to Peter. He Who appeared first to Mary Magdalen—*because* (surely) out of her He had cast seven devils and because in consequence she loved much, could not keep the contrite, loving heart of His Apostle long without a visit. In all probability then, it was still early when JESUS met the penitent Apostle.

We can well imagine Peter pacing up and down Joseph's garden in sight of the empty Sepulchre, thinking things over. He had much to think about—so much had happened in the last few days. His Master had evidently come off victorious, He had done all He had said He would—but what about himself? *He* had not done all he said he would, *he* had not come off victorious. What a miserable picture it was to look back upon—his unbelief in all his Master had said about His death and Resurrection; his behaviour on Thursday night when his Master had been with them for the last time, and when he had made his first Communion and been ordained Priest; how boastful he had been, how certain of himself, how he had despised his Master's special warning! He thought too of his neglect to watch and pray while his Master was in

an agony; of the terrible betrayal and arrest of his Master when he had used his sword and been rebuked for it; of his cowardly desertion, leaving his Master unprotected in the hands of his enemies. If only his thoughts could stop there it would be tolerable, but no, they *must* go on—on to his shameful denial: "I know not the Man!" Yes, he had said it with his own lips, three times—and the Master had heard him and had turned to look at him. At the remembrance of that look, the tears, which had hardly stopped since, flowed afresh. Then there were all the terrible hours of his Master's Passion when he had "followed Him afar off." Then the Body lying dead in the grave all Saturday, and he desolate, and almost hopeless, going to the Holy Mother and telling her everything; she had consoled him, and told him that contrition and love always touch the Heart of her Son, and that she felt sure his sin was forgiven. Now He has risen again and Mary Magdalen has seen Him just near here—if only he could see Him too—if only he could just have the chance of telling Him how sorry he is and of letting Him see that he *does* love Him in spite of all. The Holy Mother had believed in him—perhaps JESUS would too. He had heard a rumour that the angel had said to the holy women: "Go tell his disciples *and Peter* that He goeth before you into Galilee." Had He really said "and Peter,"—but perhaps it was only because he was the chief of the apostles, or perhaps the women had made a mistake or had added his name out of courtesy?

If these, or such as these, were Peter's thoughts, what must have been Our Lord's? How His loving Heart was longing to speak the word of assurance, of forgiveness and love that only *He* could speak; not even His Mother's words were enough. His moment came at last and "the Lord . . . appeared unto Simon," "the Lord turning looked on Peter" once again and all was well. No more is revealed to us and we dare not gaze or question curiously. In the delicacy of His love for sinners JESUS had arranged a little visit to Peter

all alone, so that he should not meet Him for the first time before all the others. How like Him ! How tender is the Heart of our JESUS ! Has He changed ? No, He has arranged for all time the secrecy of the Confessional where He meets His brethren, whenever they will, where He turns and looks with words of pardon on His lips and a great love in His Heart for all those who want to tell Him that they are sorry.

The Easter joy is now Peter's in all its fulness. He has got his Master back, all is straight between them, things are not only as they were before, but far, far better, as they always are after every fall rightly used.

Let us pray very specially to-day for those who have no Easter joy because they *will* not give JESUS the opportunity of visiting their souls with His pardon and His love, pray that before it is too late they may have the grace of true contrition and seek their Lord as Peter did.

Point II.—THE ROMAN GUARD

Meanwhile what was happening amongst the enemies of JESUS ? There was no contrition in their hard hearts—no seeking Him as His friends sought Him, though, had they done so, they would have found Him gentle and ready to pardon, for " When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." (Rom. v. 10.)

Guards had been set by Pilate on Saturday to watch by the sealed stone of the Sepulchre. This was a suggestion of the chief priests and Pharisees, who, on thinking things over after their Victim was safe in the grave, remembered what He said about rising again on the third day. The enemies of Christ are often quicker to see and understand than His friends, they are often " wiser then the children of light ; " the holy women did not remember till an angel had reminded them ; hatred made the chief priests remember as they lay restless in their beds on Friday night. The next day they went to Pilate and asked him to have the Sepulchre guarded till the

third day " lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people : He is risen from the dead." Pilate gave them leave and they stationed a guard of Roman soldiers before the Sepulchre, and, to make more sure, sealed the stone. Early on Easter morning there was a " great earthquake," and these soldiers saw miracles being worked before their very eyes, for " an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and coming rolled back the stone and sat upon it ; and his countenance was as lightning and his raiment as snow ; and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men." As soon as they were sufficiently recovered they went into the city to tell their masters, the chief priests. Their terrified looks and the shock from which they were evidently suffering were sufficient evidence that their words were true : When the angel broke the seal and rolled away the stone the Sepulchre was *empty* ! Quickly they called together a Council of the Ancients to decide what was the best line to take. At all costs their news must be kept from the people ; the impression made by His Crucifixion and all the miracles that had taken place in connection with it had been bad enough, and if it once got about that He had *risen,* the last error would be worse than the first. The line of action decided upon was not a very safe one, but there was no time to be lost, it was too late already, their Victim had escaped as a bird from the hand of the fowler ; (Prov. vi. 5) the only thing they *could* do was to shut the mouths of the guards, so they gave them " a *great* sum of money "—nothing was too much, for the matter was urgent—and told them to say : " His disciples came by night and stole Him away when we were asleep ! " They assured them that if it reached the Governor's ears, they would see to it that no punishment was inflicted for negligence of which they had not been guilty. " So they, taking the money, did as they were taught." And this was the story that was spread about among the Jews from mouth to mouth, and was current, St. Matthew

says, when he wrote his Gospel. Justin Martyr, writing a century later, tells us that it was still current. So no doubt the Ancients congratulated themselves on the success of their Council !

A few weeks later on the Day of Pentecost, Peter was preaching in a tongue that could be understood by all the assembled multitude, though made up of many different nations : " JESUS of Nazareth," he said, " God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that He should be holden by it." (Acts ii. 24.) He was preaching what he *knew*. A little later when speaking to the Gentiles, he said : " We are witnesses, Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people but to witnesses, pre-ordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose again from the dead." (chap. x. 40. 41.) " A prophet is not without honour save in his own country," the Master said once ; (St. Matt. xiii. 57) and it was true of Him even after His death, for while the *rumour* was being circulated in His own country that His Body had been stolen by His disciples, the *truth* was being circulated throughout all the Gentile countries that " Christ was risen from the dead," (1 Cor. xv. 20) and the saving doctrine was being offered to them : " If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord JESUS, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x, 9.)

Once more " the princes had assembled together against the Lord and against His Christ " and once more, " He that dwelleth in Heaven " had laughed at them and derided them. (Ps. ii. 2, 4.)

" Fear not, I am alive and was dead ; behold I am living for ever and ever." (Apoc. i. 17, 18.)

Colloquy with JESUS Risen and with St. Peter.

Resolution. Never to doubt His love whatever happens.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Go tell His disciples and Peter."

Emmaus (1)

THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD

First Sunday after Easter.

" Why wilt thou be as a stranger in the land and as a wayfaring man ? " (Jer. xiv. 8.)

1*st Prelude.* Our Lord overtaking the two disciples on the road.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to hide nothing from Him.

Point I.—The Two Disciples

It was probably during the afternoon of Easter Day that two of the disciples set out for a walk. They did not turn their steps towards the Sepulchre as Peter and John had done, for they had neither faith nor love enough to take them there ; even hope was at a very low ebb, and it was more in accordance with their despondent feelings to turn their back on Jerusalem with all its painful memories and to walk towards Emmaus, a town about six and half miles distant.

" And they talked together of all these things which had happened." They could not do otherwise, it was impossible to turn their attention to any other subject. They knew nothing of what had happened that day, for they were too " slow of heart " to believe any of the reports they had heard, so they probably " talked and reasoned with themselves " about the events of Friday and Saturday, and their hopes and fears about their Master. Well was it for them that they talked of Him, for their conversation kept them from despair and brought Jesus to them.

There are times in our spiritual life when all seems so dark that we know not which way to turn, we are puzzled, disappointed, sad, desolate, helpless—almost hopeless. At such times there is one thing that we can always do and it is the only thing which can save us from despair—the sin to which

we are being tempted—we can think about and, if occasion offers, talk about JESUS—of all He has done for us, all He has suffered for us, all He has promised us ; we can reason with ourselves about it all—is it likely from our knowledge of Him and from our past experience of His dealings that He would forsake us just at a crisis like this ? " They talked and reasoned with themselves." It is the surest way of letting in the *Lumen Christi*, for JESUS is never far from those whose thoughts and conversations are all about Him. " Then they that feared the Lord spoke everyone with his neighbour ; and the Lord gave ear and heard it. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that fear the Lord and think on His Name ; and they shall be my special possession, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him." (Mal. iii. 16, 17.) So highly does He value those who talk about and think about Him !

Point II.—THE STRANGER

" JESUS Himself also drawing near went with them." They did not know Him, for " their eyes were held." St. Mark who had just spoken of His appearance to Mary Magdalen says : " After that, He appeared in another shape (or under another disguise) to two of them walking, as they were going into the country." He had appeared to Mary Magdalen as a gardener, to the two going to Emmaus He appeared as a fellow-traveller on the road—" a wayfaring man." The stranger overtook them and joined them ; His intention evidently was to accompany them on their walk, " drawing *near* He went with them."

If only with the eyes of faith we could see JESUS in His love and pity drawing near and walking along the very same road, overtaking us on purpose ! He makes use of many disguises, for He wants us to walk by faith and not by sight. He is hidden in the difficulty from which we are running away, hidden in the person with whom it seems so impossible to

get on, hidden in all the disappointments and heart-aches and puzzles of life; and more, He is the cause of them all, just as surely as He was the cause of the two disciples' sadness. He *is* near, He *is* with us, knowing all our thoughts, listening to all our conversations, noticing our sadness, wondering at our want of faith, and sympathizing with our helplessness.

"Why wilt Thou be as a stranger in the land and as a wayfaring man?" To increase your love and faith and hope, my child, and to make you recognize Me under whatever disguise I choose to hide Myself.

Point III.—The Stranger's Questions

Perhaps the two disciples rather resented the presence of a third, they had not invited this Stranger to walk with them and they probably did not wish for company just then. It was quite natural that the presence of a stranger should put a stop at once to their conversation; but this was not what *He* wanted. Their Fellow-traveller wanted to make their interests His and to enter into all that was to them so absorbing. So He put a leading question: "What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad?" He knew, but He would have them tell Him. He showed by His question that He had noticed their sadness; this encouraged them to answer, for if the Stranger knew enough to know that they were sad, He surely ought to know why. Cleophas answered rather hotly: Are you a lonely sojourner in Jerusalem that you have not known the things that have been done in these days? Is it possible that you have not heard, or—which would be worse—having heard, is it possible that you are not sad too? Innocently the Stranger answered: "What things?" As He evidently did *not* know, Cleophas told Him quite simply all their troubles. He was glad of an opportunity of telling them all over again to somebody who was evidently a sympathetic listener.

Let us leave the narrative here and ask ourselves what our

answer would be were JESUS suddenly to put these three questions to us. What are you talking about ? Why are you sad ? What things are absorbing your mind ?

(1) *What are you talking about ?* especially when there are *two* together. The two disciples were able to answer that their conversation was about all the things that had happened to JESUS. Can we say that we use these precious opportunities for conversation about all the many things that concern Our Lord and His Kingdom ? Is not the time often spent in frivolous conversation, in criticism of others, in words that foster jealousy and want of charity, suspicion and discontent. Oh ! Let us remember the Fellow-traveller on the road, Who, though our eyes are held from Him, is listening to all we say, and let us talk of things in which He is interested and not of those which wound His Sacred Heart.

(2) *Why are you sad ?* We are often sad in this " vale of tears," and He wants us to come to Him in our sadness and tell Him about it. " Woman, why weepest thou ? " Mary Magdalen had an answer that was pleasing to His Sacred Heart. So had the two disciples. Their sadness was caused by their loss of JESUS. How much of my sadness has anything to do with Him ? Does it not more generally centre round self ? I have failed ; I have had a humiliation or a reproof ; my feelings have been hurt by something that has been said, or that I imagine has been said about me ; I am left out of things ; nobody wants me ; my health is bad, I cannot carry out any of my plans ; I have no talents and it makes me sad to see others doing things that I cannot do. These are some of the answers which we should have to give to Our Lord's question, if we spoke truthfully ; and they are all things which, viewed in the light of eternity, do not matter ; although if they are received with joy instead of with sadness, they will increase our happiness through all eternity. We are told that JESUS wept for two things, the sorrows of others (St. John xi. 35) and the sins of others. (St. Luke xix. 41. Heb. v. 7)

We may safely do the same. The sins of those who are hourly grieving the loving Heart of JESUS may well make us sad, and also the sorrow and misery in the world, which are the result of sin. Is the thought of my own sins then, never to make me sad? There is a great difference between sadness and contrition; of an energetic *contrition* which is ever striving to do better and to make reparation for the past we can never have enough; but of *sadness*—generally morbid, despondent and listless—we can never have too little. St. Peter, we are told, could never hear a cock crow, without weeping at the thought of his sin; these were strong tears of contrition and reparation at the remembrance of how he had wounded the loving Heart of his Master, not weak, sickly tears which would have robbed him of all energy in that Master's service.

(3) *What things* have you in your mind? Be definite, be explicit, tell Me all about them. This is what our Fellow-traveller says to us as we journey together on life's weary road. If in spite of your good resolutions you are still sad about something that has happened to yourself—something that hurts so much that you cannot get away from it, though you know you ought to forget all about it—then come and tell *Me* what it is. I, Who am travelling on the same road, know all the difficulties and I am travelling with you on purpose to be a strength and consolation to you. What is it that hurts so much? There is never any fear of losing the merit of it by telling *Me*, and in the telling, the pain will almost disappear, and by the time I have told you that I have experienced exactly the same thing Myself, and that it was *I* Who arranged this little trial for you so that you might have the joy of being like Me, it will quite disappear and your sadness will be turned into joy.

Colloquy with our Fellow-traveller on the road of life.
Resolution. To tell Him all that makes me sad.
Spiritual Bouquet. "What things?"

Emmaus (2)

CONVERSATION WITH THE STRANGER

Monday after first Sunday.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory." (St. Luke xxiv. 26.)

1*st Prelude.* The three in earnest conversation on the road.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to keep nothing back from JESUS.

Point I.—THE TWO DISCIPLES' STORY

When they saw that the Stranger seemed interested and sympathetic, Cleophas and his companion told Him everything that was in their hearts concerning JESUS of Nazareth: He was a prophet mighty in work and word before God and all the people, and our chief priests and princes condemned Him to death and crucified Him. "We hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel." Quickly they had arrived at the point which hurt most. He was such a great prophet that we had always hoped he might prove to be the Messias. Evidently they hoped no longer, for their words were a distinct avowal that they no longer believed in the prophet. Then, to justify their want of belief, they added: "Besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done." We had just a little hope that something might happen on this third day that He used to talk about, but now even that ray of hope is gone, for "the day is far spent." The Stranger made no comment, He did not interrupt their eager story, but He was evidently much interested and was listening very carefully, so they thought it better to tell Him *all* they knew—even the wild stories that were floating about that day. "Certain women of our company affrighted us," (the two had evidently been with the others when the holy women came back from the Sepulchre and when their words

seemed to them " as idle tales," St. Luke xxiv. 9–11) " who before it was light were at the Sepulchre and not finding His Body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive." The story was quite correctly quoted, but as they did not believe it, it meant absolutely nothing to them. " Some of our people "—that is Peter and John—" went to the Sepulchre and found it so as the women had said; but Him they found not." So they had had the convincing evidence of Peter and John as well as that of the holy women, and yet not a ray of light had entered their dark, despondent hearts—" *Him they found not.*" Therefore there was no more room for hope. And yet the *Lumen Christi* was so near !

We blame the two disciples and we wonder at their unbelief, and yet, given similar circumstances, it is quite probable that we should have acted in the same way. We pray for a certain thing to happen and make up our minds that it is going to happen; God answers the prayer, but not in the way we were expecting, something much better has been planned out for us, but we do not see it; we will not acknowledge God's Hand, but spend all our time in bewailing the fact that things have not turned out just as we hoped—" *We hoped* "—but now it is no use—" Him they found not ! "

Point II.—The Stranger's Answer

They had said all, and they stopped, waiting to see what their Fellow-traveller had to say. " O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken ! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory ? " How surprised they must have been at these words of reproof from the Stranger, and yet they showed no resentment, but let Him say all He would. He spoke with such conviction and such authority that they began to see at once that they were on entirely wrong ground, and to wish for more light on a subject which He seemed to know

all about. Because their prophet had suffered and died they had come to the conclusion that He could not be the Messias. The Stranger showed them that it was just the very thing that the Messias ought to have done according to the Scriptures, and that if they had not been "foolish and slow of heart to believe," they would have expected it and taken it as a proof that He *was* the Messias. *Ought* not, did it not behove, the Christ to have suffered these things, and so (by suffering) to enter into His glory? The *Lumen Christi* was beginning to dawn in their minds, they began to see that it was after all possible that JESUS of Nazareth, Who had been crucified, was the Messias. Hope began to come back.

The Stranger had not done yet; "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him." What a wonderful walk that must have been when JESUS Himself interpreted the Scriptures and pointed out all the Messianic prophecies! No wonder the hearts of the two disciples burned within them while He opened to them the Scriptures! "Beginning at Moses," with the great prophecy of the Messias given in Eden where suffering is hinted at, on through all the Psalms and Prophets, He shewed them that the Messias was to be a "Man of Sorrows, acquainted with infirmity, struck by God and afflicted, led as a sheep to the slaughter," (Isaias liii.) and that all these prophecies were bound to be fulfilled before He could enter into the glory of His Kingdom.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered?" Could He have fulfilled the prophecies without suffering? It is impossible. Suffering is mapped out for Him in every type and prophecy. Each of the millions of little lambs that suffered and died on the Jewish Altars point to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Satan is to lie in wait for the heel of the Woman's Child. Isaac carries the wood on which he is to be offered, up the mountain of Moriah. And so on all through the Scriptures, it is plainly indicated that the accompaniments

of the Messias and His Kingdom will be suffering, sacrifice, *the Cross.*

Is it wonderful that He should say when He came: If any man will come after Me, let Him take up his cross and follow Me? No, it is most natural, we could not have expected anything else. If Christ ought to suffer, His followers ought to suffer too. If it behoved Him to give Himself as a sacrifice for sin, it behoves them to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. The disciple must not expect to be above his Master. He has left us an example that we should do as He did, and that example is suffering in one form or another. Let us be thankful, then, for our crosses, take them as proofs that He is with us "in the way"—that we are not travelling by another route, and let us remember that as surely as He entered into His glory by means of suffering so surely shall we, if we keep on the King's Highway—the royal road of the Cross.

Point III.—He made as Though He would go Farther

They had arrived now at the little hamlet of Emmaus. So interested were they in the Stranger and His conversation, that they had forgotten all their trouble and sadness. Their minds were filled with a new light—a new idea, and though it never occurred to them that the Stranger might Himself be the Messias, they were nevertheless buoyed up by a new hope, and their hearts warmed towards Him Who had awakened it. Emmaus had been reached all too soon, and when they saw that He evidently meant to leave them at their destination and continue His journey alone, they felt that they could not part with Him. "Stay with us because it is towards evening and the day is now far spent."

Why did He make "as though He would go farther"? Why did He pretend He was going on, pretend He was going to leave them when He did not intend to do anything of the kind until He had revealed Himself to them? For the same

reason that " when it was late " one other evening, and He had come walking on the sea where His apostles were " labouring in rowing," " He would have passed by them." (St. Mark vi. 47, 48.) For the same reason that He had appeared as a Gardener to Mary Magdalen and to themselves as a Way-faring Man, though He might have revealed Himself at once as He had done to the holy women that morning and would do to His disciples later on that night. It was because His loving Heart was longing to hear them say: Oh! Stay with us, do not leave us, we cannot do without Thee. He was increasing their love and their faith and their hope, and bringing joy to His own Heart at the same time.

How often He makes as though He would go farther in our lives, pretends something that we dread is in store for us, makes us feel that we are going to lose Him ! Why ? Just to make us say : " Stay with us." Oh! Do not let us be faithless, we ought to know Him by now, ought to dread nothing, feeling sure that what we dread so much is only one of His " make-believes " to draw out our love and trust. He will never leave us, and if He is with us what is there to dread ?

" It is towards evening and the day is far spent." They searched for reasons to give why He should stay with them, they were shy about giving the real one, namely that during one short walk He had become such a necessity to them and had so drawn out their love for Him that they could not bear the thought of parting with Him ! He had reproved them sharply for their want of faith and had proved to them how richly they deserved it, but this had only served to draw them nearer, as a wise and tactful reproof is wont to do. He had explained to them the Scriptures which they loved, He had shown them that He knew a great deal about their loved Master, He had revived their dying hopes, He had chased away their sadness, and they felt that it was impossible to let Him go. " They constrained Him," pressed Him, compelled Him by their urgent entreaties, but more still by the

desire and love of their hearts. They were now drawing Him with the cords of love as He had been drawing them.

" It is towards evening." Fear not, He will never forsake in the evening of their lives those with whom He has walked and talked in " the afternoon air," (Gen. iii. 8.) and who have borne the burden and heat of the day with Him and for Him. " Even to your old age I am the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you ; I have made you and I will bear ; I will carry and will save." (Is. xlvi. 4.)

Let us take His reproofs meekly, listen to His instructions and compel Him by our love and desire as did the two disciples, and all will be well.

Colloquy with JESUS making " as though He would go farther."

Resolution. To constrain Him by my love to stay with me.

Spiritual Bouquet. Mane nobiscum. Stay with us.

Emmaus (3)

OPEN EYES AND BURNING HEARTS

Tuesday after first Sunday.

" Why wilt Thou be as a wayfaring Man turning in to lodge." (Jer. xiv. 8.)

" And He went in with them." (St. Luke xxiv. 29.)

1*st Prelude.* The three going into the house together.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to understand God's dealings with us.

Point I.—THEIR EYES WERE OPENED

" He went in with them." He accepted their hospitality. They intended to give Him some refreshment before He continued His journey—it was the least they could do for a fellow-traveller, apart from the fact that they were so drawn to Him. " Hospitality do not forget ; for by this, some being not aware of it, have entertained angels." (Heb.

xiii. 2.) But He had His intentions too, He intended to be the Host and to give them refreshment, their Viaticum, the Food for the journey. He took His place at the head of the table, "took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them," before they had time to offer Him any refreshments. "And their eyes were opened," the *Lumen Christi* flooded the room of the little way-side inn and filled their hearts too, "and they knew Him."

What made them know Him? They answer the question themselves: "They knew Him in the breaking of bread." (St. Luke xxiv. 35) The dignity with which He took His place at the table, the way in which "He took the bread and blessed and brake" it, must have made the light begin to dawn; but when He *gave It to them*, the veil was lifted from their hearts, their eyes were no longer held, they saw the King in His beauty and they knew not only that the Way-faring Man, Who had come in to tarry with them, was their lost Master, but also that their Master was the Messias, that He had risen as He had said, and had worked again the miracle for them that He had worked on Thursday night for His apostles—had fed them with His own most precious Body and Blood. "*And they knew Him* and He vanished." The *Lumen Christi* disappeared again from the little room, but not from their hearts. Never, never would they forget that moment of intense consolation. They had no time for words, neither was it the time for them. "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." "I have found Him Whom my soul loveth."

How beautiful it is! And yet it is only the story of a good Communion. First the remote preparation, the walk with Jesus—a very imperfect one often—He hiding Himself under all sorts of disguises, we failing to recognize Him; He administering reproof, by those whom He sets over us, for our folly and slowness of heart about many things, and we (unlike the disciples) resenting it perhaps oftener than accepting it; He instructing us in so many different ways,

we paying so little attention. Then the immediate preparation when we make our acts of love and desire and beg Him to come under our roof, intending to spread before Him the good things which by His grace we have been able to prepare for Him ; and then the great moment when He makes Himself the Host and feeds us with Himself. We know Him. It is our JESUS, our Fellow-traveller, Who gives us our daily Food for life's journey, Who makes Himself known to us in the breaking of bread as He does in no other way, Who floods our soul with the sunshine of His presence, and then vanishes. Why is it that we are not spell-bound with delight as were the two disciples ? Why do we feel no difference between His appearance and His disappearance ? Because our Communions are not necessarily accompanied by consolation and because we do not see with our bodily eyes, as did the two disciples, the Sacred Humanity of JESUS. Our Communions are not a matter of feeling but of faith. If in spite of our foolishness and slowness of heart to believe, our journey along life's road is spent in the company of JESUS, if we do our best to carry out His instructions, if we love Him however feebly and want Him to stay with us and if in these dispositions we take the Food of the journey which He has provided and commanded, then we *are* making good Communions and we may safely leave their effects to Him. Sometimes in His love and goodness He may give us a little sensible consolation but what is that compared to the Food ? Consolation is at best but transitory, but the Food will "guard our souls to life eternal." By it our Fellow-traveller works many a miracle of grace in our souls on the journey, though they are all unknown to us. It is *He* Who has charge of our souls ; let us have more faith ; *He* is using our Communions and working in our souls by means of them ; there is no need for us either to see Him or to see what He is doing or to *feel* the effects of His work. " He vanished out of their sight " and they had to continue their walk by faith and not by sight.

Point II.—Their Hearts were Burning

He had vanished, but their eyes were opened—they were different men, their whole point of view had changed, they had seen Jesus Risen, the Stranger had turned out to be their Friend and Master; depression, sadness, despair, all were gone and in their place was an unutterable joy. All had come right, He was after all "a Prophet mighty in word and deed" and much more than a Prophet. He had suffered and died because it was written in the Scriptures that He should. He had risen again, as He said, and yet He was just the same—their own Master, for had He not walked and talked with them as before? And, best of all, He had fed them with the mysterious Food of His own Body and Blood—the Food that He had promised to give.

"And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way and opened to us the Scriptures?" They saw in the light of the *Lumen Christi* all that had happened on that memorable afternoon; they reminded one another how "their hearts were burning within them" in the way though they did not then understand why. Now it was all clear: (1) They were burning because a burning and shining Light was so near them though their eyes were held and they saw it not. (2) They were burning with shame at the words of reproof from a stranger; they knew now Who it was Who had reproved them and they understood why they felt so conscience-stricken. (3) They were burning because a light was being thrown upon the Scriptures which they had never seen before; and they knew now the reason—the Scriptures were being explained by the God Who had written them and their subject was the God-Man Who was walking and talking with them. And now their hearts were still burning—burning with *love*—for had they not received from His Hands their First Communion, and had they not seen with their own eyes the print of the nails? That He had vanished out of their sight mattered little

to them now. Their faith was so strong that the accident of sight made little difference. Love burnt so brightly in their hearts that they were satisfied—and their Easter joy was so great that nothing was lacking.

Point III.—The Return to Jerusalem

"Rising up the same hour they went back." They could not stop to rest—they were in a hurry to get back to the others and share the good news with them. "And they found the eleven gathered together and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." Peter then had got back and told his good news, else it could not have been known, just as his denial could not have been known had he not told it. Now the two disciples added their testimony, and "told what things were done in the way and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread." They told the whole of the beautiful story from the beginning when their eyes were held to the end when their eyes were opened. But their words did not meet with much credence—St. Mark says curtly: "Neither did they believe them!" They seem to have believed Peter—it was more in accordance with their wishes and hopes that He should appear in a beautiful, dazzling, glorified Body, showing clearly that He had triumphed over death, but the story of a "Way-faring-man turning in to lodge" did not appeal to them any more than did Magdalen's story of a gardener. It had rather the effect of making them wonder whether after all they had not been rather rash in believing Peter!

It must have been rather damping to the ardent enthusiasm of the two disciples to find so little credit given to their story, and perhaps they were tempted to wish that they had not been in quite so much hurry to tell their good news. It certainly would have been more in accordance with their feelings to have stayed longer to rest and to have spent more time in the room which had been lit up by the *Lumen Christi*,

and where their Master had made Himself known to them; but were they wholly free from blame? May they not have had something to do with the Apostles' unwillingness to put any faith in their story? Their conduct before they left the little group early in the afternoon was hardly likely to inspire confidence; they were probably dull and moody, as despondent people generally are—perhaps touchy and irritable and not much regretted by the rest when they took themselves off for a walk! Peter had far less to say than they—yet his bare statement met with credit while their thrilling story did not.

May we not learn one last lesson from these two disciples? It is good, very good, to be full of zeal, as they were, counting fatigue and their own wishes as nothing if only they could spread the good news; but zeal in God's service, if it is to be of any use, must have something behind it. When we are feeling discouraged at the little good that we seem to do, the little effect we are able to produce, let us be quick to put the blame on ourselves. Before I begin to try to help my neighbour it would be well for me to remove the stumbling block which lies between us. The power of zeal lies in the life far more than on the lips. This does not mean that I must be perfect myself before I attempt to do good to others, but it does mean that people study my *life* rather than my words. The person I am likely to influence is the one to whom I have been to apologize for my bad temper, or to take back something I said that was not quite true or quite charitable. I have proved then, that when I recommend charity or truthfulness, or good temper, I mean what I say for I am practising what I preach. The Catholic doctrine—so often misunderstood by outsiders—of putting the salvation and the perfection of one's own soul first is not a selfish one. He who attends most carefully to the perfection of his own soul is doing the most for the soul of his neighbour.

On the other hand I must be careful to make no mistake—it is not *because* I have done my best for a soul that it is going

to be touched ; no, the grace of God alone can touch a soul. " Neither he that planteth is anything " (even if he be a Paul) " nor he that watereth " (though he be an Apollos) " but God giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) What I have to do then is to plant and to sow as if all depended on me, to remove all stumbling blocks (in myself) out of the way of God's grace and then to leave all results in the Hands of Him on Whom all depends, and Who gives or withholds the increase as it seems best to Him.

Colloquy with Him Who talks with us in the way.

Resolution as to my zeal.

Spiritual Bouquet. " They told what things were done in the way."

The First Appearance to the Apostles (1)

" PEACE BE TO YOU ! "

Wednesday after first Sunday.

" *Now whilst they* " (the two who had been to Emmaus) " *were speaking these things Jesus stood in the midst of them and saith to them : Peace be to you. It is I ; fear not.*" (St. Luke xxiv. 36.)

1*st Prelude.* JESUS showing His hands and Feet and Side.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to hear the " It is I, fear not."

Point I.—" PEACE BE TO YOU "

It was " late," St. John tells us, when JESUS made His last appearance on Easter Day, namely that to " the eleven and those that were with them." St. Thomas was not there, but the little Community went by the name of " the eleven," just as before the death of Judas it had gone by the name of " the twelve." (St. John xx. 24.) The doors had been bolted again after the entrance of the two disciples who had been to Emmaus, for they were all sorely afraid of the Jews ;

those who had crucified the Master might easily lay hands on the disciples. The disciples had had a very long and trying day; with the exception of Peter and John and Cleophas and his companion, they had been afraid to go out; they had heard various reports—that the Sepulchre was empty, that the Guards had slept and the Body had been stolen, that there had been a vision of angels, that the Master had been seen alive, that He had sent them a message to say He would see them in Galilee, that Mary Magdalen had seen Him and mistaken Him for a gardener, that Peter had seen Him—his story had seemed much more likely—but then had come Cleophas and his companion with their story about mistaking Him for a traveller on the road! How unlikely! If He *had* risen why was He not there with them, His disciples? Where else would He be? And then *would* come the thought, did they deserve to see Him after the way they had treated Him? Had they not all forsaken Him and fled just at the moment when He needed them? Had they not left Him in the hands of His enemies to die alone without raising a finger to help Him? Was it astonishing that He should forsake them and leave them to themselves?

While they were speaking and thinking "JESUS came and stood in the midst!" The doors remained closed, there was no need to let Him in. By the power of His Godhead, He passed through the closed doors as He had passed through the sealed Sepulchre. They knew Him at once, but were troubled and frightened thinking it was a ghost, just as we should be if someone, whom we knew to be dead, suddenly appeared to us. They had thought the same thing one night when they saw Him walking on the sea while they were rowing against the wind. (St. Mark vi. 48-50.)

"Peace be to you!" It was the old familiar voice and the old familiar theme. "On earth peace to men of good will," the angels had sung at His birth; He came to "direct our feet into the Way of peace" (St. Luke i. 79)—that is into

" the Kingdom of God which is peace and joy ;" (Rom. xiv. 17) He wept over sinners who did not know the things which were for their peace ; (St. Luke xix. 42) and in His last talk with His disciples before His death, they had heard Him say : Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. These things have I spoken to you that in Me you may have peace " (St. John xiv. 27.–xvi. 33). Now that He had risen from the dead He had not changed. It was the same sweet message of *peace*. Indeed as St. Paul says : " He is our peace," for " He preached peace to you that were afar off "—the Gentiles—" and peace to them that were nigh "—the Jews (Eph. ii. 14–17)

The message is quite clear ; it is peace that He means His children to have. Is it mine this Easter ? Has He spoken to my soul and said : Peace be to you ? I may be sure that He has spoken if I am one of His disciples, but am I, like them, still " troubled and affrighted " in spite of His words, or am I allowing the joy of Easter to penetrate to such an extent that it banishes all cares and troubles, and makes me say in spite of all about which I am fearful : Peace ! My King has conquered ; He has risen as He said ; and for all His followers the victory in the end is sure, though many battles may be lost and the day often seem hopeless ?

Point II.—" It is I ! Fear Not ! "

" *It is I* "—the same words that He used on that stormy night at sea when they had been so frightened at His appearance. " *Fear not.*" The very thing that you are afraid of and are dreading so much is I Myself, I am hidden in it, do not you recognize My voice, you have heard it before ; do you not remember how the very apparition that you dreaded turned out to be your best Friend Who had come to help you ? It is the same now, there is nothing to fear, it is I Who am there, waiting to console and help you as soon as you recognize Me. You so often say : " God has brought good

out of evil." What you mean is that God was hidden behind what you thought was evil and that you have only just recognized Him. Try to hear My Voice saying: "It is I, fear not," as soon as the trouble comes in sight; you will not dread it then, but run gladly to meet it knowing that you are going to meet your best Friend under one of His many disguises. What can there ever be to fear if your faith is strong enough, for if I am there all must be well. Calm your fears and agitation, and you will be more likely to hear My Voice saying: "It is I."

The Apostles however were not yet reassured, they were still "troubled and frightened" and showed no signs of realizing the truth, so JESUS spoke again: "Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" They were still in a state of terror; we should say now-a-days, their nerves were unstrung, they were incapable of believing what seemed so patent. It only shows us that the possibility of the Master rising again from the dead had never entered their minds, in spite of the plainness with which He had spoken of it.

"Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" He knows all those faithless unworthy thoughts that we allow sometimes in times of trouble He sees how we criticize His dealings with us and think them hard and unjust. He hears our unspoken murmurings: He might have spared me that! He might have arranged otherwise! He need not have taken just the things I cared for most! And all the time He is there, saying: "It is *I*, why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Cannot you trust Me yet? Cannot you believe that your sorrow is going to be turned into joy, and that the pain I am now permitting you to have is nothing to the joy that I have in store for you?

Point III.—"SEE MY HANDS AND FEET"

Handle and see that it is I Myself, and He showed them His Hands and His Feet and His Side. How natural! How

tender ! How like Himself ! He longed to re-assure them, to win their confidence, to put them at their ease, to allay their fears and to give them the Easter joy, and so He allowed them to feel and touch and see for themselves that it was *not* a spirit—but " I Myself." Then He stretched out His Hands and His Feet and showed them His *wounds*. After that there could be no doubt ; but His love for them went further—He uncovered His Side and let them see the opening made by the lance, let them listen for themselves to His Sacred Human Heart beating with love for them as before. It was indeed Himself ; His Body was glorified but it was the same Body, the wounds were there and His Heart, which had stopped at His death, was beating again to stop no more.

It was irresistible. St. Luke describes their conflicting feelings by saying : " they yet believed not and wondered for joy ! " The transition of feeling was so sudden, the joy so intense, the wonder of it all so great that they dare not commit themselves by saying they believed, in case after all it should not be true and they should be robbed of their joy, but each in his heart *did* believe, for their joy was the result of their faith.

How is it with me ? Sometimes my trouble is so great that I cannot hear the " It is I, fear not." I do not seem able to believe it. But the wounds ? Ah ! When by faith I can see those proofs of what He has suffered for me, I am content to suffer and so be a little like Him. I am proud to show Him *my* wounds, to let Him know that although my heart is broken I am filled with joy and wonder because I know it is Himself Who has done it, because He is allowing me to tread the path that He trod, because the mark of discipleship is so unmistakable, because He has given me something to bear for Him, and something to offer to Him to help on His great work. Where can I get strength for this—strength to regard my troubles from this point of view and to see Him in them ? " He showed them His Side." He is ever pointing to that

opening which leads to His Sacred Heart and inviting His children to come in; and, once safe in that refuge, all is well, faith is strong, the "It is I, fear not" is clear and unmistakable, the courage to go on is no longer wanting and the love for our Master is so great that we can but "wonder for joy" at all the things that He has done and suffered for us.

Colloquy with Him Who is saying: "It is I, fear not!"

Resolution. To look into my troubles till I find *Him* there.

Spiritual Bouquet. "It is I Myself."

The First Appearance to the Apostles (2)

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Thursday after first Sunday.

"Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (St. John xx. 23.)

1*st Prelude.* Jesus giving the great Commission to His Apostles.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace never to doubt the "authority."

Point I.—"Have You here Anything to Eat?"

Not that He was hungry, for His glorified Body had no need of food, but He wanted His disciples to be quite at ease. He had important things to say to them but first He would have them quite sure and quite clear about what had happened. He wanted their conflicting feelings to cease, and the great fact of the Resurrection to take possession of their minds and hearts. So for *their* sake He asked: Have you here anything to eat? The question was so natural, so like what it always had been when He was with them. He wanted them to realize that He was Himself. They began to act more naturally

too now; "they offered Him" just what they had on the table—"a piece of a broiled fish and a honey-comb," from which He made His simple meal, they looking on and gradually realizing the truth that He had risen as He said, that it was He Himself, that His risen Body had not changed its nature, that it was their own Master, that all the stories were true. Peter would go over again in his mind the precious little visit he had had, Cleophas and his companion would be reminded of the table of Emmaus and their hearts would burn again. By the time He had finished they were all quite at their ease, all fear and doubt had vanished, the Easter joy filled their hearts.

"And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains, He gave to them." They had probably supped before He came in, and He had simply eaten what was left on the table, so there was no question here of His giving them to eat—indeed there could not have been enough for "the eleven and those that were with them" unless He multiplied the food which there is no reason to suppose that He did. No, it was simply His old care of the "fragments"—His love of Holy Poverty. Twice before He had bidden them gather up the fragments that remained after a meal, that nothing should be lost, and now He does the same Himself and hands them to the Apostles as something precious and to be taken care of. It was another little reassuring touch for the Apostles, it was indeed their Master Himself—just as before. How touching it is that He should think such little things of importance now in the hour of His triumph, just as much as in the time of His humiliation and suffering. Surely He would teach us, among many other lessons, that His care for detail, and His love of little things is just the same now as it was when He lived on earth among us. It was for our sake that He ate before His disciples, and it was for our sake too that He was so careful to collect "the remains." Let us learn our lesson—if nothing was too small to be noticed and cared for by Him,

nothing is too small for us to notice and be careful about *for Him.*

St. Mark tells us that He chose this moment when they were at table for reproaching them " with their incredulity and hardness of heart because they did not believe them who had seen Him." (St. Mark xvi. 14.) He had noticed it but He waited till calm was restored and all their doubts and fears were allayed before administering the reproof which His love would not allow Him to withhold. They had not believed His witnesses—His Mother, St. Peter, Mary Magdalen, the other women and the two who had just come back from Emmaus. They had treated all their reports as so many fairy tales ! It was most important that they, whom He was going to constitute His witnesses, should understand the gravity of refusing to believe witnesses, for the whole of His plan for spreading His Kingdom and preaching the gospel depended for its success on the way witnesses were received and believed. So He reproached them, not only for their own benefit, but to establish a principle for all time.

How unworthy their unbelief must have seemed to them in the light of their strong faith ! How impossible now to realize the state of unbelief they were in only a few minutes ago ! It is ever thus with the soul as it passes into higher regions of faith and light ; but JESUS notices, and He would have the soul notice too, that it might have " come up higher " sooner but for its want of confidence, and He lets His gentle reproaches be felt.

Point II.—" AS THE FATHER HATH SENT ME, I ALSO SEND YOU "

" Again " St. John tells us, He said to them : " Peace be to you," (chap. xx. 21) for He would remove the little cloud caused by His reproof. The peace could not enter in when He said it before, they were too frightened and troubled, but now faith and joy have met together in harmony, the

conflict has ceased, a peaceful joy and a joyful peace are established in their hearts and they are ready for anything He has to say to them. He wanted these dispositions, for what He had to say was very important. This interview was not a private one as had been the other five on Easter Day, it was an *official* one. The Master had something to say to the Apostles, and through them to their successors, which would affect His Church to the end of time.

He changes His tone and bearing now that their fears are allayed. He is no longer the familiar Friend eating from their supper table and allowing them to handle Him, but He is their *Master*. He has a solemn commission for " the eleven " only, not for " those that were with them " and He gives it with dignity and authority : " As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." How close to Heaven these words must have made them feel ! The Father, Me ; I, you. Their commission was a direct one from God Himself. It would make them think of the Prayer which they had heard their Master make to His Father for them before His death : " They have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them, because they are Thine. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. Holy Father keep them. Not for them only do I pray but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me." (St. John xvii.) These words which they had heard under such solemn circumstances must have been indelibly impressed on their hearts, and they must almost have expected that what He had said to His Father about them, He would say to them themselves—must almost have expected their commission. " *As* the Father hath sent Me." The Father had sent His Son with His own authority. " All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth." (St. Matt. xxviii. 18.) " I also send you "—with that same authority that was given to Me. My *Apostles* —My *sent ones*. It was all so secure, they were linked so firmly to Heaven, that there seemed no room for doubt, no

possibility of going wrong, no need to fear the responsibility. It was so simple, so clear: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also *send* you." The tense is a never ending *present*, an action which will continue to the end of time. Not only to the Apostles, but to each of their successors indivdually the Master says: *I* send you, as the Father sent Me.

Point III.—"RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST"

He has *sent* them now—given them the authority that the Father gave Him, but He has not yet told them what the Commission is, what they have His authority to do. Before He does that, He will prepare them still further. He has been preparing them ever since He "came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you," but now they are ready for more; and when He had said: I also send you, "He *breathed* on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost." When God formed man of the slime of the earth, He "*breathed* into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul," that is, a soul that would live for ever. He gave it a different sort of life to that He had given to the "beasts that perish." Now our Lord breathes on His Apostles to give them the power to make souls live. He gives them the principle of life—the Holy Ghost—to pass on to others. The Holy Ghost was not given in all His fulness till Pentecost, but He is given now for a special purpose, for something which, without His agency, would be useless—lifeless. *Now* they are quite ready to receive the great Commission:

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are (*have been*) forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain they are (*have been*) retained." When you, in your office, forgive sins, your words are ratified in Heaven at once, because you have My authority; the sins have been forgiven because you have spoken, the forgiveness is already a thing of the past; and when you, by virtue of your office, on account of your knowledge gained from the confession, decide that some particular

sin shall be *retained*—that for some reason or other it is not proper matter for you to exercise Christ's authority upon, then at once in Heaven that sin has been retained by God Himself.

It was His Easter gift to the Church—the Sacrament of Penance, and it was the most natural one for Him to give first. It was the crown of His work. He had just come back as Victor over death and sin, and now He gives to His successors the power which is to hold sin captive throughout all time. Sin is the only obstacle between man and God. Christ came solely to remove that obstacle. It was promised in Eden that One should come Who would crush the serpent's head—crush the power of sin. When He came, He came as a Saviour, to save His people from their sins. Part of His mission on earth was to forgive sins. "Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee," He had said to a man sick with the palsy, and when the scribes accused Him in their *thoughts* of blasphemy, He worked a miracle on the man's sick body to prove to them that He could do the same for his sick soul, and that "the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins." (St. Matt. ix. 2–6) "Who is this that forgiveth sins?" thought the Pharisees on another occasion when they had heard Him say to Mary Magdalen: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." (St. Luke vii. 48, 49) Who is this? He to Whom as Man, authority to forgive was given by His Father. Who are those now who forgive sins? Those to whom, as His representatives, authority has been given by Christ Himself. "*As* the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."

By His Resurrection from the dead He has triumphed over sin, and over death, the child of sin; now He hands to His Apostles the trophies of His victory. My Father is satisfied, the debt is paid, the prisoner can go free, I give you the authority to loose his chains and to pass on to him the Peace that I have come to make between God and man—peace that can only come from reconciliation. "Whose sins you

shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

What need we have, with the Apostle Paul, to "glory in God, through our Lord JESUS Christ, by Whom we have received reconciliation" (Rom. v. 11) And how we ought to thank Him again as every Easter comes round, for the wonderful gift He has left to His Church, a gift by which we can be sure that our sins have been forgiven and that we have been reconciled to God!

Colloquy with Him Who says so often to me in the Sacrament of Penance: "Go in peace."

Resolution. To value more than ever the Sacrament of Penance—Christ's Easter gift to the Church.

Spiritual Bouquet. "As My Father hath sent Me, I also send you."

"Thomas called Didymus"

Friday after first Sunday.

"Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." (St. John xx. 24.)

1*st Prelude.* Thomas coming in.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to love Our Lord as Thomas loved Him.

Point I.—THOMAS CALLED DIDYMUS.

Thomas called Didymus (a twin) was one of the twelve whom JESUS appointed that they "should be with Him and that He might send them to preach." (St. Mark iii. 14.) He had received power like the rest to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils." (St. Matt. x. 8.) He had with the rest forsaken His Master in the hour of His need, and now for some reason which we can only

surmise, for we are not *told* why, he had separated himself from the others and so " was not with them when JESUS came." This is all we know about St. Thomas hitherto except one incident which shows that he loved his Master even unto death. It is told in one short verse, but it speaks volumes about St. Thomas' character, and it is well for us to have it in our minds while we study the next scene in which he appears ; it will throw light on it, and make us more lenient towards the doubting Apostle than we are perhaps disposed to be. " Thomas, therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples : Let us also go that we may die with Him." (St. John xi. 16.) JESUS was in Galilee, whither He had gone to escape from the Jews who were trying to kill Him, and He was proposing to go back into Judea, to Bethany, where his friend Lazarus had just died. The Apostles tried to dissuade Him, pointing out the risk He was running ; and it was the quiet answer : " Let us go to him," which drew forth from Thomas the loyal, courageous words : " Let *us* go that we may die with Him." He felt the danger as much as any of them, but he felt also that where His Master was, he must be and that if there was death in store for Him, His disciples must face it too. His Master's words to them when He first called them had gone home : " It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." (St. Matt. x. 25.) He clearly understood the spirit of Lent : " In what place soever Thou shalt be, my Lord King, either in death or in life, there will Thy servant be " (2 Kings xv. 21) and he acted up to it this time. Later on in the Garden, when he saw the enemies of his Master taking Him prisoner, he had not the courage, but forsook Him and fled. Can we afford to judge him hardly ? We made the same resolution during Lent, we kept it at first, but at the end when things were harder, did we not fail Him too ? He chose us specially to be with Him and we accepted His call and were proud of it, we quite understood what He meant about it being enough for the disciple to be as his Master, but yet when

that Master asked for something which looked as if He expected us to be ready to die with Him, did He always find us saying : " Let us go ? " It was not a question of martyrdom but of death to the old man. Will you help me with this ? The request came from one of His disguises. No, I am really too tired or too busy or not well enough ! Was not that forsaking Him ? It certainly was not being with Him wherever He was. To refuse to disturb ourselves to give five minutes of our precious time and strength (both *His*) is to refuse to put the old man to any inconvenience—much more to refuse to kill him !

With those thoughts in our mind let us consider St. Thomas' conduct on Easter Day. He was full of love for his Master, full of zeal, (he became the Apostle of India later), full of courage and good will, and yet he failed Him in His time of need. It is a thought full of consolation for most of us. His Master had been put to death and he, in spite of his good resolution, had not raised a finger to help Him. Now the third day was nearly over. He was worn out with the longing for the Master Whom he so truly loved. He was sick to death with all the unlikely rumours that he had heard, and now this last one about a way-faring man turning out to be the Master put an end to his patience ; he would rather be away altogether, somewhere by himself, where it was impossible to hear any more stories, and so he slipped out into the dark night probably just before the *Lumen Christi* arrived ! If only he had waited a few minutes—perhaps only seconds—longer ! If only he had remembered that the darkest moments are always those just before the dawn ! And if only we could remember too that when things are blackest it is just the moment for holding on, not for giving up !

Point II.—" WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD "

It was " late " when JESUS appeared on Easter evening to His Apostles, it must have been *very* late when they had to

unbolt the doors again to let in Thomas. He had left them despondent and gloomy and sad, but now they have some news for him which will assuredly put fresh heart into him. Eagerly they tell it: "We have seen the Lord!" After this first glad acclamation, we can imagine them telling him first one incident and then another of the visit—how terrified they were, just as they had been on the lake, though this time there was no doubt that it was He; how He said: "Peace be to you," just in the old tones, and had shewn them His Wounds and allowed them to handle them; and then how He had eaten some supper and gathered up the fragments like He always used to; and how at last, when they were no longer afraid, He had given them just the sort of commission they would have expected from One Who "had power on earth to forgive sins," and Who had told His Father that He was going to send them as He had sent Him. They were full of joy and peace—full of the *Lumen Christi* and they longed to communicate it to Thomas, who had missed so much through his absence.

We may learn from the Apostles that if there are times to be silent as was St. Peter, about our spiritual experiences, there are also times to speak. St. Paul writing to the Corinthians says: The God of all comfort comforteth us in all our troubles that we also may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted by God—for if we be comforted it is for *your* comfort.[1] (2 Cor. i. 3–6.) This throws a fresh light on our troubles and also on God's consolations. Trouble often makes us selfish—this is not God's intention. One of His intentions certainly is that it may make us sympathetic, able to understand and enter into the troubles of others. If we can say to those in trouble: I have passed through just the same thing

[1] The English translation loses the force of the Greek which gives the same word for *comfort* throughout the passage.

myself; what a bond there is at once between us. The sufferer feels at once that he is talking to someone who knows by experience, and who is therefore qualified to speak. Our Lord took the pains to qualify Himself for the same reason. "We have not a High Priest Who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but One tried in all things like as we are." (Heb. iv. 15.) And if God comforts us in our trouble, one of the reasons why He does so is that we may use that same comfort that He gives us, for the troubles of others. This is just what the Apostles were doing now for Thomas; they knew what he was going through, for they had themselves been in exactly the same trouble. They had been comforted by their Master and now they tried to pass on that comfort to Thomas by saying: "We have seen the Lord." What He did for us He can and will do for you, if only you trust Him and believe us His witnesses.

Point III.—Thomas' Answer

He listened carefully to all they had to say: it was the testimony of *many* witnesses; all they said was so likely and so natural, it was no story of strange disguises and exaggerated words and deeds, which indeed the story of the two who went to Emmaus must have seemed; and then they had spoken of the prints of the nails in His Hands and Feet which they had handled, and of the wound in His Side. His stricken heart overflowed with love and desire, it was more than he could bear, and he gave his answer: "Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into His Side, I will not believe." Though your evidence is overwhelming I dare not, I cannot, I *will* not let myself believe that what I so long for is true; the pain of finding it to be false would be intolerable —if only I could see the precious Wounds as you have done!— No, unless, I *see* for myself the print of the nails and put my

own finger into the holes, and put my own hand into His Side, *I will not believe.*

In this state we must leave the doubting Apostle for eight days as his Master left him, but who among us dare cast the first stone at him? He only wanted what all the others had had; not one of them had believed till they had seen. Instead of criticizing his want of faith let us rather dwell on his great love, which made him feel that nothing short of personal contact with his Master could satisfy him. This is the kind of love Our Lord values and wants from us, the love that treats Him as a personal Saviour, a personal friend. When is faith strongest? Is it when we are reading the testimony of others about Him or listening to their words, or is it when we kneel in silence before Him feeling that there is no one in the world but just Himself, when His words come directly to the heart, and the soul is lost in Him? This is a personal touch. When in the midst of the absorbing whirl of work, we can lift up our eyes directly to Him and say: It is all for Thee, dear Lord—this also is a personal touch; and there is one that is still more personal, and that is the actual contact with the Wounds in His glorified Body at the moment of Holy Communion. "My Beloved to me, and I to Him."

How do I use these three opportunities, which occur so often in my life, of a personal touch by *faith*—for that is what the Master asks of me as He asked it of Thomas? Do I value the times when I can be alone with Him, seeing Him so clearly with the eyes of faith that I have no need of further helps? Is He so present with me in all my work, of however absorbing and secular a nature, that I find myself continually talking to Him as I should to my dearest friend? And what about my Communions? Is my faith so strong that I continue them regularly in spite of coldness and dryness and a feeling that they are of very little use? Our Lord gave Thomas a splendid opportunity of exercising his faith, perhaps because of his great love—He often tries most those who love Him most—

but Thomas refused it. He gives me splendid opportunites every day of exercising mine, how often do I refuse Him and say: I will not?

Colloquy with Him Who is always making demands on the faith of those who love Him.

Resolution. To prove my love by my faith.

Spiritual Bouquet. "We have seen the Lord."

The Second Appearance to the Apostles

"AFTER EIGHT DAYS"

Saturday after first Sunday.

"*After eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them.*" (St. John xx. 26.)

1*st Prelude.* JESUS speaking to Thomas.
2*nd Prelude.* The grace of a strong faith.

Point I.—"AFTER EIGHT DAYS"

"Again His disciples were within." The room was probably the one where the Last Supper had taken place and which they now used as a common meeting-room. They would naturally cling to the room where they had been all together with their Master for the last time. It was a room which had a special history attached to it on account of the way it was chosen, (St. Luke xxii. 8–13) the room where the Paschal Supper had been eaten, the Holy Mass instituted, where they had received their first Holy Communion and been ordained Priests, and lastly it was here that JESUS a week ago had paid them His first official visit and given them the power to forgive sins. It looked as though He expected to

find them there in this room of so many sacred memories, and approved of their being there all together. We do not know what they had been doing during the week. It is impossible to imagine them keeping their good news to themselves. They probably went about telling one here and another there that they had "seen the Lord," and trying to spread abroad a belief in His Resurrection. It is probable too that they spent some time with the blessed Mother; they would certainly go and tell her all that happened on Easter evening, and she probably explained to them many of the things her Son had said and done during His ministry which, now that they believed in the Resurrection, they were able to understand. She is their Mother now, and if her Son is spending these forty days in giving them authority and "speaking of the Kingdom of God," (Acts i, 3) there is much that she can do by enforcing and explaining His teaching and encouraging them to follow it. It *may* have been she who told them to meet all together again on that next Sunday night, for certainly her Son must have appeared often to her during the forty days, and what more natural than that He should tell her that He wanted to see Thomas. Anyway "after eight days" they were all together again and the doors were shut and bolted as before, for a meeting of a considerable number of the followers of JESUS was sure to excite the enmity of the Jews; and this time Thomas was bolted inside with the others. Poor Thomas! What his feelings must have been, through all that long week we cannot imagine! He must often, on account of his great love, have been on the verge of giving in, and saying that he did believe, but doubts still held him fast and his attitude remained the same: I will not believe. He had probably not been to the blessed Mother, he would be afraid of hurting her feelings by his doubts about her Son, and perhaps he would be a little ashamed to have to own that he had missed the Master's visit through not being with the others. What a mistake people

make who leave Mary out and do not think it worth while to take their troubles to her who knows so intimately the Heart of her Son ! Had Thomas gone to see her, it is impossible to think he could have remained in his obstinate state of unbelief —she would not have reproached him, she never does, but her gentle pleadings, her firm faith and her intense love for Him, Whom Thomas loved so truly too, would surely have removed every doubt from his aching, lonely heart.

Point II.—"JESUS STOOD IN THE MIDST"

He suddenly appeared just as He had done eight days before, without opening the doors, and standing in the midst of them said : Peace be to you ! How glad they must have been to see Him again ! There were no fears mingled with their joy this time ; but it was not for them that He had come ; fixing His Eyes on Thomas He said : "Put in *thy* finger hither and see My Hands ; and bring hither *thy* hand and put it into My Side ; and be not faithless, but believing." Every word stung Thomas like a lash, and in an instant he was on his knees uttering the cry of faith : It is my Master ! *and* it is my God ! What had wrought the change ? The print of the nails ? He did not see it. Putting his finger into the holes? He would not. Putting his hand into His Side ? No, he did not wait for that. What then ? The fact that JESUS knew all about his doubts and had heard—yea, was repeating—all his faithless words : "Put *thy* finger," as thou saidst, "put *thy* hand." It was the same thing which had astonished Nathaniel—that Our Lord should know his thoughts while he was sitting all alone under the fig-tree ! "Whence knowest Thou me ?" he asked wonderingly. It was the same thing too which astonished the woman of Samaria and made her say to the men of her city : "Come and see a Man Who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is it not the Christ ?"

"Be not faithless, but believing." He had been faithless, wilfully faithless all this week and His Master had known

all about it and it had pained Him. He had expected him to believe on the testimony of His witnesses and Thomas had not risen to His expectations. He had kept him waiting a whole week to give him every chance—but in vain. Now Thomas believed with all his heart and was making reparation to the Sacred Heart of JESUS, by an Act of Faith: "*My Lord*," that is, My Master—he recognised Him at once and made an act of faith in the Resurrection; "and my God"—no act of faith could go further than this, for he believed that his Risen Master was his God. All was right now between Thomas and the Master Whom he loved so dearly. He had sinned, he had suffered, he had made his Confession and had been forgiven; but when he got up from his knees he saw his Master standing with outstretched Hands—He was waiting for Thomas to do his "penance!" We can imagine him hesitating: Not now, Lord, there is no longer any need for me to touch the Wounds, I can believe without that.—But the Master still waited; this little humiliation was good for Thomas, he had been so certain that he could not believe till he touched, and now though he believed with all his heart, he shall do what he had said he would—look at the prints, put his finger into the holes and his hand into the Wound by His Heart. If it was a humiliation to him to be reminded of his faithless words, what a consolation it must also have been to see and touch those Wounds and how it must have increased his love and joy though there was no need to increase his faith!

Point III.—"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN AND HAVE BELIEVED"

While a deep peace is taking possession of Thomas' soul as he feels the beating of the Sacred Heart telling its great love for him, unworthy of it though he feels himself to be, JESUS is looking on to all the millions of His children who will never see Him with their bodily eyes till they see Him on the day

of the General Resurrection, when " every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him," (Apoc. i. 7) and He speaks again to Thomas : " Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed "—not because thou hast seen My Wounds, but seen *Me*. Thomas knew Him and believed in the Resurrection as soon as he saw Him. The Master's tone is one of rebuke. Thomas can bear it now that his soul is at peace. Your action is a blessed one, you have seen Me and you have believed, but there is a more blessed action still—that of those who have not seen Me and yet have believed. The rebuke consisted in the fact that Thomas might have been amongst these latter.

Blessed are they who have to walk by faith and not by sight ! Blessed are they who when they see the little Host elevated at Mass, can say with as much faith as did St. Thomas : " My Lord and my God ! " Blessed are they who can detect their Master hidden in whatever disguise He assumes ! Blessed are they who can endure by " seeing Him that is invisible ! " (Heb. xi. 27.) Blessed are they who have those precious Wounds ever before them, because they cannot forget that it was their sin which caused them, and because the Precious Blood flows from them ! Blessed are they who can live in His Sacred Heart and know that it is beating with love for them ! Blessed are they who can take Him at His word and believe that all will be as He says ! Blessed are they who can take everything from His Hands though they never see them ! Blessed, thrice blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed ! Do not let us envy the Apostles or those whom He blesses with visions, but rather cling on to the title " Blessed " which He Himself has given to us if we live up to the high standard of faith which He taught. " Without faith it is impossible to please " Him, and it is because He *will* have it from His children that He provides them with countless opportunities for practising it.

How am I using my countless opportunities ?

Colloquy with my Master and my God.

Resolution. To earn the title " Blessed " to-day, especially when things go wrong and I am inclined to doubt, because I cannot see the pierced Hands which are arranging everything for me.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

The Third Appearance to the Apostles

TIBERIAS (I)

Second Sunday after Easter

" *This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples after He was risen from the dead.*" (St. John xxi. 14.)

1*st Prelude.* The seven disciples in the boat.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace never to lose the peace which He has given.

Point I.—The Seven Disciples

The scene now shifts from Judea to Galilee. There was no need for the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem after Paschaltide was over; their homes were all in Galilee, as probably were those of most of the disciples. Our Lord had told them, even before His death, that it was in Galilee that He would meet them, and since His Resurrection the angels at the Sepulchre and the Risen Christ Himself had told them the same thing. It was only natural then, that as soon as it was free to do so, the " little flock " should flee from the wolves in Jerusalem and get back to the hamlets of Galilee, where it was comparatively safe. This was probably why the Master chose Galilee; it would be less dangerous for them if His public appearance took place in a part of the country distant from the Sanhedrin, which was on the look out to pounce on

anyone who dared to spread tidings of the Resurrection. The enemies of Christ had spent a large sum of money in advertising another story and they would have been furious with any who were found to discredit it.

So it was probably soon after Our Lord's second public appearance to His Apostles, when Thomas was with them, that they found themselves in Galilee, and faced with another problem—how to live ! They had given up all to follow their Master three years ago and, with Him, had been dependent for their necessities on the ministrations of others. Now that His mission was over, they must again seek means of a livelihood. Peter's mind is quickly made up: "I go a-fishing ! " he exclaims, and the others, evidently glad at the prospect of something to do, answer: "We also come with thee." Who were these others ? "*Thomas* who is called Didymus " is the first mentioned (after Peter), he is not likely to miss anything again by separating himself from the little community ! "*Nathaniel*, who was of Cana in Galilee," to whom his Master had promised when He first saw him that he should see greater things than these (St. John i. 50), that is, than One Who could read his thoughts —the other Evangelists call him Bartholomew, the son of Tolmai ; " the sons of Zebedee " and Salome—" Simon's partners," (St. Luke v. 10) surnamed the " Sons of thunder " by Our Lord, on account of their zeal which was not always according to knowledge ! (St. Mark iii. 17) *James* who was the first of the little band to die for his Master, (Acts xii. 2) and *John*, " the disciple whom JESUS loved," who with St. Andrew was probably the first to follow Him ; (St. John i. 35–40) " and *two other* of His disciples " whom St. John does not name—perhaps Andrew Peter's brother, and Philip, who " was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." (chap. i. 44) It was a little band of the Master's most devoted followers. They had all seen Him since He rose again. Thomas *once*, the others *twice* and Peter *three* times. Every-

thing was right with them, their enemies were a hundred miles away, they were full of joy and gratitude and love, so with Peter at their head and good-will in their hearts " they went forth " in the little fishing boat on to the lake they knew and loved so well.

Point II.—And that Night they caught Nothing !

That night, when it was so necessary for them that they should catch something ; when they had every expectation of success, for they were experienced fishermen, knew their waters, had started just at the right time of the evening and knew the likeliest spots ; *that* night, when they had done their best, when they were in such good dispositions, when they had come to Galilee in obedience to their Master's commands ; *that* night, after they had been so highly favoured by their Master, after He had shown them so clearly that they were His friends just as much now in His hour of triumph as in His hour of suffering and apparent failure, after He had raised them up above all others by giving them a part in His own divine power—*that* was the night that the Master chose, for it was He Who arranged that His tired and perhaps hungry Apostles should toil all through that long dark night and catch *nothing*. Why ? To teach them and us too a lesson that we are rather apt to overlook—that though the Master has risen and gained the victory over sin for us, the victory is not ours *yet* ; it will be one day, but as long as we are here tossed about on the stormy sea of life we shall often catch nothing, often fail in spite of our efforts, and just in the very things about which we felt most confident, often be weary, hungry and desolate, often be disposed to give up and to wonder what is the use of the Master's victory if we cannot share it, to wonder why He has so specially favoured us if He is going to leave us alone like this, and allow us to fail just like ordinary inexperienced people ! Such would be our thoughts sometimes if we dared to express them.

It is just here that the Easter *peace* comes in, to answer all our questioning and stop all our murmuring and make everything that happens in our lives clear and comprehensible. He has conquered and given us the peace which He has earned for us and that peace is to "keep our hearts and minds" (Phil. iv. 7) till the storms of life are over and we can enter into the joy of Our Lord. Not yet are we ready, our fighting days are not over, many a battle will be lost, many of our efforts will end in failure, many a time we shall toil all night and catch *nothing*; but if His peace is in our hearts we shall know that to try in God's service is to succeed, that the word "failure" is often found to mean "success" when it is translated into the language of the Kingdom of Heaven. No effort made for our King counts for nothing with Him, and often when a failure is being recorded on earth, a victory is being recorded in heaven, on account of the contrition, patience, submission and faith with which the humiliation is borne.

That night. The practical conclusion is that after a special time of blessing He often arranges a special time of trial. Is it not natural that He should? He gives the grace and the peace first and then puts it to the test. So after a Retreat, after Holy Communion, after a call to the Religious Life, after a Profession, after any time of special grace and privilege, let us make quite sure of our *peace* and then all will be well if a storm should arise.

Point III.—When the Morning was Come, Jesus Stood on the Shore

He could have come before. He knew all about the difficulties of the night, but He knew also that His faithful Apostles had His peace in their hearts and that courage and confidence would not fail them. He could trust them, and so He kept them waiting. He treated them as He treated His friends at Bethany, Martha and Mary, who sent to tell Him

that their brother Lazarus was sick; "when He heard therefore that he was sick He still remained in the same place two days!" It is a sign of real friendship and confidence when JESUS can act thus with souls. When He knows that His peace is such a reality in their hearts, that neither toil nor fatigue nor trouble nor disappointments nor failure have power to touch it. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. My peace I give unto you." He has said it to me this Easter; am I one of those whom He can keep waiting, though things are undoubtedly difficult, because He is sure of my *peace*?

"*When the morning was come.*" When the long, dark fruitless night of incessant toil had done its work, when their humility and distrust of themselves were just what He wanted them to be, when they had done all they could—for it was no use trying to catch fish in the morning where there had been none during the night—and were putting back beaten, when things were at their worst with no prospect of being any better, *then* "JESUS stood on the shore." That was His chosen moment for letting Himself be seen. We may always be quite sure that He is standing on the shore ready to give His help when the right moment comes; so instead of being impatient for the troubles and difficulties to be ended, let us be anxious to use all the opportunities that He is giving us and to do all that He expects of us, before He reveals Himself and gives us the necessary help—before our opportunity of showing Him what His peace can do for us is over.

"*Yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*" During the night it had been impossible for them not to think of Him and the many times when He had been with them while they were fishing, sometimes asleep in the boat, once even walking on the waves to come to their assistance. They had probably been hoping all night that He would come again, and their hopes had helped to keep up their courage, but they did not expect Him to be standing on the shore watching them, so

they "knew not that it was JESUS." Another reason for their not recognizing Him was the dim light of the early dawn and they were some distance still from the shore. But the real reason was that He was disguising Himself again. He did not want them to recognize Him just yet. He wanted to put their faith and humility still further to the test.

We do not always recognize Him at first, the mists of the morning find us half blinded by the troubles of the night; the eyes of our faith are weak, it is very difficult at first to recognize that our disappointed hopes, our troubles and difficulties and failures are all due to the fact that JESUS is standing on the shore of our life's sea regulating everything for us with the utmost care and love and skill. How differently we should act, how strong our faith would be, how courageously we should meet our troubles and failures if only we knew that it was JESUS. And has He not told us over and over again: "It is I, be not afraid?"

Colloquy with Him Who, in many different disguises, is always standing on the shore of my life's sea.

Resolution. To recognize Him at once to-day.

Spiritual Bouquet. "That night they caught nothing."

The Third Appearance to the Apostles

TIBERIAS (2)

Monday after Second Sunday.

" Jesus therefore said to them : Children, have you any meat ? They answered Him : No. (St. John xxi. 5.)

1*st Prelude.* JESUS calling to them from the shore.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to recognize Him in times of failure.

Point I.—CASTING THE NET

" JESUS *therefore* said to them "—because they did not know Him and He wanted to keep up the disguise ; not " *Children* "—had He used this term of endearment (chap. xiii. 33) they would have known Him at once—the Greek word means rather *boys, lads, mates.* He addresses them as one fisherman would another or perhaps as someone wishing to buy fish : Have you any fish, mates ? How He loved to disguise Himself ! And how He loves it still ! They had not any fish for themselves and they certainly had not any to sell, so they gave the simple answer : *No.*

The Stranger was not satisfied, but called out again : " Cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find."

What opportunities for practising virtues dear to the Heart of JESUS this order gave to the disciples ! They had acknowledged their failure and their helplessness by their straght answer : *No;* so they were already in good dispositions. Let us look at what JESUS wants from those who own their weakness :—

(1) *Humility.* " Cast the net on the right side." How natural it would have been for the Apostles to answer : Who is this who gives us orders ? Does he know more about these waters than we do ? Does he suppose we have not already tried the net upon the right side ? Should we be such

fools as to spend the night in doing nothing and making no efforts ? We do not know who *he* is, but *we* are men of experience ! This is how *we* should probably have answered, judging from the way we do answer if anyone " interferes " with our work or tacitly criticizes our methods by making suggestions. Even if the method suggested is new to us we are not very gracious about it, we perhaps even pretend we had already thought of it ; but if it is something we have already tried, how quick we are to let it be known, how indignant and resentful, how unlike the seven Apostles, who, without saying a word, took the suggestion and cast the net !

(2) *Obedience.* It was their *spirit* of obedience which was so beautiful. This Stranger on the shore was not their Superior in any way—just a fisherman like themselves ; or, if he had only come to buy fish, one who had less right still to give orders ; but they were so childlike, so simple, that they were ready to obey anyone without any questioning. How different to our spirit which wonders " why " directly an order is given—even by those who have a right to give it.

(3) *Courage.* It needed courage to obey that order. The Stranger on the shore had " asked a hard thing " as is His wont. They were worn out with the efforts of the night, their work was finished and they were looking forward to repose, they were disappointed and ' down on their luck ' ; they were not at all in the mood to begin again. Another thing that made the order specially hard was, that they were asked to do over again exactly the same piece of work, in exactly the same circumstances in which they had failed. That is a humiliation that takes courage to face, and they faced it—they cast the net. How do I face humiliations of this kind ? These seven were true *disciples*—true followers of the Master Who said : " Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart." They had His spirit, and they showed it though " they knew not that it was JESUS " to whom they were showing it. I cannot say that I do not know, for I have

been told so often about His many disguises, and it is to Him Himself that I too often show a spirit so different from His own.

Point II.—The Multitude of Fishes

"*They cast therefore*"—because they were told, directly they were told and just where they were told—on the right side. The side of obedience is always the right side even though the action done may turn out to be a failure; the fact that it is done by obedience prevents it from being a failure in God's sight.

"*And now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes,*" for He Who "created every living and moving creature which the waves brought forth" had prepared a great shoal of fish which filled the net, and so their last efforts were crowned with success; their simple trust and obedience were rewarded. His hour had come. He wanted failure to do its work first; they would be less likely then to be harmed by the joys of success, less likely to attribute the success to themselves, when they had proved to themselves over and over again that there were no fish to be caught. It clearly was not their efforts nor their skill that had brought those fish into the net, and John, the disciple "whom Jesus loved," was the first to see it; he said to Peter: *It is the Lord!* They were doubtless reminded of that other time they were fishing on the lake, after which they had left all things to follow Him. (St. Luke v. 4–11) Peter, James and John were all there—it had been a night like this one when they had taken nothing, but they had let down the net again at the Master's bidding, and thus enclosed such "a very great multitude of fishes" that the net broke! They filled both the boats—Peter's and Zebedee's—"so that they were almost sinking." Peter was so "astonished at the draught of fishes that he fell down at Jesus' knees saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." This was some three years ago at the begin-

ning of Our Lord's ministry, but it must have come vividly before their minds on this night after the Resurrection when they found they could not haul up the net, and convinced them that the Stranger on the shore could be none other than their beloved Master. It was John who *spoke* and Peter who *acted*; he "girt his coat about him" and without a moment's hesitation "cast himself into the sea." He could not wait, but must go at once. He did not say: "Depart from me" this time, but made every effort to get closer to Him. Faith and love again. This time faith seems to outstrip love, at the Sepulchre love seemed to outstrip faith, teaching us perhaps that these twin virtues ever go hand in hand and that one cannot really outstrip the other.

So Peter once again had a few minutes alone with JESUS. What efforts do I make to be alone with Him? It is quite possible in the midst of the busiest and most distracting life to be alone with Him, and it is quite possible to live in a cloister and never to be alone with Him at all. It would be a good question to add to our Examen of Conscience: Have I been alone with JESUS at all to-day?—that is: Have I felt Him to be such a real friend that what others were saying and doing did not in the least matter? I could talk to Him and He cared to listen—that was enough. "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." "She went after her lovers and forgot Me, saith the Lord. (How He notices!) Therefore behold I will allure her and will lead her into the wilderness (where I can have her to Myself), and I will speak to her heart." (Osee ii. 13, 14.)

"*But the other disciples came in the ship, dragging the net.*" It was useless to try to get such a big haul of fish into the little boat, so, as they were only 200 cubits (about 100 yards) from the land, they dragged the net through the water till they got ashore, where they adored their Master and probably wondered that they had not recognized Him before. It is ever so; when the morning comes and throws its light on the

dark night that is passed, when all has turned out well and once more God has brought good out of the seeming evil, we wonder that we did not recognize Him, wonder that we did not see what He meant when He spoke ! It is so easy to recognize Him when our net is full of fish, and so hard to do so when we catch nothing.

Point III.—Hot Coals, Fish and Bread

" And as soon as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying and a fish laid thereon and bread." What a cheerful sight this was for the hungry weary fishermen—a fire all ready and their breakfast cooking upon it ! Who had made this preparation ? It was Jesus, their loving Master, Who knew all their needs, Who had witnessed all their difficulties and Who now, just to give them a little pleasure, had got things ready for them. It was not necessary, they could quite well have done it for themselves when they arrived, but it was a little attention on His part to make up to them for the disappointments and trials of the night. Oh ! What a tender loving Heart is the Heart of our Master ! " Learn of Me, I have left you an example." It is not waste of time to do little things to give pleasure to others, especially if we happen to be their Masters or Superiors, and especially if those little things are not in the least necessary. It is just because of this that they touch their hearts and it is then that we are most like our Master. The *necessary* things we are obliged to do, but it is the little surprise, the little thought for their welfare or comfort, the remembrance of their hard work, the sympathy with their fatigues and difficulties, the word of encouragement spoken even in a time of silence—for charity passes before everything else—the little alleviations and joys which cost us perhaps much to arrange, and which we are sorely tempted to say are not part of our duty because they are not *necessary*—these are the things that oil the wheels of life,

and make for peace and harmony, that make people love God more and that spread the Kingdom of Christ.

Let us beware of being selfish in our Easter joy. We should be able to sacrifice our ease, our time, our own personal interests, our health if need be, if only by so doing we can bring a little more joy and hope into the hearts and lives of others, and so encourage them to do their best. JESUS had done everything for His Apostles ; all they had they owed to Him, even down to their large haul of fish, but yet He did not forget to prepare their breakfast !

His loving Heart is still the same—so tender, so thoughtful even about little insignificant things which do not in the least matter, but which nevertheless make such a difference. " I have given you an example that as I have done, *so you do also.*" (St. John xiii. 15.)

Colloquy with JESUS Risen.
Resolution. To take the trouble to be kind.
Spiritual Bouquet. " It is the Lord ! "

The Third Appearance to the Apostles

TIBERIAS (3)

Tuesday
Thursday after Second Sunday.

" Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught." (St. John xxi. 10.)

1*st Prelude.* The empty boat on the shore, the heavy net still in the water, the fire, the fish and the bread, and six disciples just landed, JESUS and Peter.

2*nd Prelude.* To give Him all the glory in times of success.

Point I.—THE FISH WHICH YOU HAVE CAUGHT

The first thing they noticed on landing was the fire. It is the *little* attentions that attract men's hearts, and when their

hearts are once gained we can go on to more serious things, can make our suggestions or give our orders, "reprove, entreat, rebuke" (2 Tim. iv. 2) without fear of doing more harm than good.

JESUS is the first to speak, and He gives them an order: "Bring hither of the fishes which *you* have now caught." Here is another lesson for us in tact—encourage people and give them the credit for what they have done even though they may have done it at our suggestion and under our direction. When shall we learn how much encouragement souls need? When we understand more of the love and tact of JESUS in dealing with our own souls. The Apostles had not had much to do with that haul of fish, they had cast the net and that was all, they had not even hauled it up, it was still in the water; the most unskilled fisherman could have done what they had done, and yet JESUS speaks as if it were all their work, and more—as if He could not do without those fish that they had caught, the meal was not complete without them, they could not begin, though all looked so ready and though it was JESUS Himself Who had prepared the repast. "Bring hither of the fishes which *you* have caught." I need your efforts, they are very precious to Me. I am not thinking only of this last little bit of success, but of the failure of the night, of the brave stand you made against discouragement, of the way you held on, in spite of difficulties till the morning. Now bring the fruit of your efforts and I will add it to Mine. It is ever thus with our Master. He makes Himself out to be in need of us and our help. He shows us plainly that He wants our co-operation, that He is not going to do all for us, but expects us to do our share. We may not do much, we may toil all night and take nothing, that does not matter to Him, what He wants is our toil, our honest effort in spite of difficulties; whether there is anything to show for it or not does not trouble Him, He can easily supply the fish; but in His work in our own souls or in the souls of those we are trying

to help, He *will* have our co-operation. Bring of the fishes which *you* have caught, bring your efforts, your disappointments, your weariness, your hunger, your failure, and if you happen to have a little success, add that too, offer them all up to Me for the virtue you are striving to obtain or for the soul you are longing to win or for the holy souls in Purgatory so dear to My Heart, I will join them all to My work which is perfect and finished and in need of nothing, but which I do not choose to allow to operate till you have brought of the fish which *you* have caught and laid them by the side of Mine.

Could we not learn just one more lesson here before we pass on? We are so apt to let people feel that we can do without them, that we have no need of their help, that we are sufficient for ourselves. Perhaps it is quite true, perhaps too the work would be better and quicker done without their help, but it would be more Christ-like to accept the help of others and to make them feel that they are useful, even necessary to us —more like Him Who only put one fish on the fire when He could just as easily have put twenty, and it would have saved much time and labour too! "Learn of Me."

Point II.—Great Fishes

Simon Peter then went and drew the net to land. It was his boat, he was the captain of the little crew, he was responsible, so it was quite natural that he should be the one to go. Also if there was anything to be done he was generally the first to do it, his character was impulsive, willing, generous. He had had his little time alone with the Master, now the others are having *their* opportunity. He must have been some little time away for he not only had the heavy net to haul ashore, but he stopped to count the fish before making his selection to bring to the meal; there were one hundred and fifty three and it was not difficult to choose, for they were all "great fishes." The Master must have been pleased when He saw that he was stopping to count the fish and that he noticed

what fine ones they all were, showing clearly that the draught was miraculous—the work of a God and not of a man. He loves us to count our mercies, to notice how great they are and to acknowledge His divine power in them. His Heart is a human Heart and He likes His little attentions as well as His big blessings to be appreciated by His children. He was hurt when the nine lepers He had cleansed did not take the trouble to thank Him. We often pray very earnestly during the darkness of the night, and that is good, but let us be very careful that we do not forget our thanksgiving when the morning has come and all is well with us again.

Then JESUS seeing Peter coming along with the fish, said to them: "Come and dine"—rather: Come and make your morning meal. "And none of them durst ask Him: Who art Thou? Knowing that it was the Lord." His Resurrection Body could not but fill them with awe which prevented them from being quite at ease; He was so different, they dare not ask Him Who He was, and yet at the same time He was so like what He had been before that there was really no need to ask Him, they *knew* it was the Lord.

I know it is the Lord too, though I allow my failures and my fatigue to make such a mist before my eyes that I cannot see Him; but I dare not ask Him: Is this Thy doing O Lord? Is it Thou Who hast permitted this failure, Thou who has planned these difficulties? I should be ashamed to ask because I know full well that it *is* He, and that I have not acted as if I believed it, have not trusted Him, have not been patient, courageous and persevering as I ought to have been, have been inclined to sit down under my difficulties, to let my troubles embitter me and make me disagreeable to every one, and to say when I failed: It is no use my trying, I may as well give up! What shall I do, now that I fully recognize that it is He and that it has been none other but He all along? Do as the Apostles did—give Him all the glory, make a little time to be alone with Him and give Him a specially warm greeting,

to make up for the way I have slighted Him by not recognizing Him ; then count His mercies noticing how great they all are, not forgetting to include the failures. So shall I be ready to accept His loving invitation to come and dine with Him.

Point III.—The Meal

Jesus presided again at the table. He took the bread and gave it to them and the fish in like manner. It was a little foretaste of the joy and victory of eternity ; they were sitting down with the Master sharing the spoils which they had taken with Him. He gives us these little foretastes of victory sometimes ; it is not all failure and trouble, there are times of success too, times of consolation when He makes His presence felt and forces us to cry out : It is the Lord—times when He lets us *see* that when we join our efforts to His, things are bound to turn out well, for He *cannot* lose the day, nor we either if we throw in our lot with His. We are on the winning side and victory will one day be ours in spite of the many battles which, through our weakness and stupidity and cowardice, we lose during the great war. The fight is never really too much for us if we use the grace He gives us, for He never says : "Bring of the fish which you have caught," till He has put them into the net ready for us to bring. He only asks for what He has given, and we have nothing else to bring ; but it must be brought before we can sit down with Him. " To him that shall *overcome* I will give to sit with Me." (Apoc. iii. 21.) Trophies He will have, though He does not mind how small they are. Let us go on bravely then fighting our battles against self, being certain that each little victory is counted by Him Who was pleased that Peter counted the fishes, certain too that He will count each failure as a victory if we turn it to good account by our contrition and firm resolution. Then when the call comes from the Master standing on the shore of eternity : " Bring hither of the fishes which you have caught," we may fearlessly go to meet Him knowing that it is the Lord,

our Master and our Friend, Who is inviting us to His own marriage supper, (chap. xix. 9) that we may go in and sup with Him and He with us (chap. iii. 20) through all eternity.

Colloquy with JESUS standing on the shore.

Resolution. To bring Him some fishes to-day.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught."

The Third Appearance to the Apostles

TIBERIAS (4)

Wednesday after Second Sunday.

"*Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs.*" (St. John xxi. 15.)

1*st Prelude.* JESUS questioning Peter.

2*nd Prelude.* To be able to answer the great question to the Master's satisfaction.

Point I.—THE GREAT QUESTION

So far all has been preliminary. The object of this third official visit of JESUS to His disciples is now going to be made plain. The object of His *first* official visit was to bestow the Sacrament of Penance on His Church, the object of His *second*, to give His Church the great principle that from henceforth it would have to walk by faith and not by sight; and the object of the *third*, was to confer the Primacy on St. Peter; and so when He has prepared His disciples by failure and success; when He has assured them by His power and by His care, not only for their needs but for their comfort, that it is Himself; when He has warmed and fed and rested them; He assumes a different tone and attitude, and turning to

Simon Peter, He addresses him by his full name as He had done on two other solemn occasions :—(1) When He met him for the first time, " and looking upon him said : Thou art *Simon, the son of John,* thou shalt be called Cephas," (St. John i. 42) showing that He knew all about him, past and future. (2) After he had made his noble confession : " Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God," JESUS answering said to him : " Blessed art thou, *Simon, son of John.*" (St. Matt. xvi. 17.) When JESUS again used his full name Peter must have guessed that something of importance was coming.

" Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me, more than these ? " Quickly Peter's mind would go back to his presumptuous words before his Master's Passion : " Although *all* shall be scandalized in Thee, yet not I ! " (St. Mark xiv. 29.) " More than these ? " No, less than any of them, in his humility he was saying to himself, for I was the only one who denied Him. " More than these ? " The Master wanted to show Peter that as He was now going to make him head of His Church He wanted a greater love from him than from the others. The head should be greater in every way than the members. Peter had shown on several occasions that he *had* this greater love which the Master expected from the one whom He had marked out as the Head. (St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19.) When " many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him " because His doctrine was too hard for them, and JESUS said to the twelve : Will you also go away ? It was Peter who answered : " Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life." At the Washing of the Feet it was his impetuosity without doubt which made him say : " Not only my feet but also my hands and my head " (St. John xiii. 9), but it was also his greater love. When a little later JESUS said to His Apostles : " Whither I go you cannot come," it was Peter who said : " Why cannot *I* follow Thee now ? I will lay down my life for Thee." (chap. xiii. 33–37.) Impetuosity again made him draw the sword in defence of his Master,

(chap. xviii. 10) but we can also detect the greater love. The asking to be allowed to walk on the sea to go to his Master and the plunging himself into the sea to swim to Him as he had done just now, tell the same tale—it was a greater love, a love that must do something *more* than the others. This was the love JESUS wanted from His Head, and before He conferred the office upon him He asked him whether he had it. "Lovest thou Me more than these?" And Peter answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." In his humility he left the words "more than these" unanswered. His Master knew what a great love was his, but Peter could only think of his boasting and his fall: Whether less or more than these I know not, but I love Thee and Thou knowest it.

He has passed the first part of his examination; there is no doubt about his humility or his love. The great Examiner is satisfied and gives him a part of the commission which He had already promised him, (St. Matt. xvi. 16–19) and which Peter in his humility no doubt thought he had forfeited by his denial. He saith to him: *Feed My lambs.* My "little flock" I now confide to you to feed. He calls them *lambs* because He wants to point out how helpless they are, how dependent, how unable to feed themselves—that they will perish unless their food is brought regularly to them. It is Peter whose work it will be through all time to see that they are fed. "I will feed My sheep and I will cause them to lie down saith the Lord God, and I will set up one Shepherd over them," (Ezech. xxxiv. 15, 23) the *Good Shepherd* Who giveth His life for the sheep and feeds them with His own Body and Blood. And when the Good Shepherd had finished His work He appointed His Vicar on earth to take His place and give the sheep their Food, investing him with His own divine power and with authority to pass it on to his successors. Thus He secured to the lambs their Food throughout all time. "Feed My Lambs"—teach them what the Food is, the value of it, its necessity; make them hunger

for it and then feed them with the Bread which will guard their souls to life eternal. Such was the first part of the authority with which Our Lord now invested Peter, and which he was to distribute to the other shepherds.

How secure He made the children's bread ! On that quiet early morning, after the homely meal on the shore, by His Almighty power in two or three words He set up the machinery—so simple and yet so powerful—which has lasted already for nearly 2000 years and will last to the end of time. There will always be a Shepherd who has the authority to feed the sheep.

Point II.—The Question for the Second Time

What joy and hope and consolation the Master's command must have brought to the heart of Peter ! He had, in spite of all He had suffered at Peter's hands, kept His word. The promise was : " I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that is : I will make thee the Head of the Holy Catholic Church, and now He has entrusted to him the feeding of His little flock—made him the Head.

But the Master has not finished yet—" He saith to him *again* : Simon, son of John (the same solemnity) lovest thou Me ? " The humility and the contrition of His Apostle were very precious to the Heart of Jesus, and before He went on to the next part of His commission, He gave him an opportunity of deepening them. A little cloud rises in Peter's horizon ; he is not so sure now of his Master's intentions ; He had not asked him anything about the others this time, the question now is not whether Peter loves Him more than they do, but whether he loves Him at all. The Master seems to be doubting him ! Lovest *thou* Me ? Oh ! Surely He must know that ; there cannot, there must not be any doubt about that—" he saith to Him : Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." He saith to him : Feed My lambs, or as the words really are : *Shepherd My sheep.* Now the cloud has gone again, his

Master has given him further power. He trusts him after all, He believes in him and in his love. Once more Peter is happy.

"*Shepherd My Sheep.*" The sheep want other things besides food, they need guidance, they are quite unable to find their own way or to choose their own paths; they need to be kept from the wolves of heresy which will be so ready to get in and spoil the flock; wolves will sometimes appear in sheep's clothing and the foolish sheep will be puzzled, they will need a shepherd to tell them which are sheep and which are wolves; they will wander out of the fold sometimes, for sheep are silly things, and they will need a shepherd to go after them and bring them back; they will need a shepherd's crook to help them over the difficult places and sometimes a shepherd's staff to correct them; they must have a shepherd to lead them gently, to carry their burdened ones, to put their lambs on his shoulder, to call them by their names; they must have a shepherd to follow, and one whose love for the flock entrusted to him is so great that he will be ready to give his life for the sheep if necessary. The needs of the sheep are indeed many and great, and a shepherd is a necessity. When JESUS said to Peter: "Shepherd My sheep," there was not one danger or difficulty or pitfall that He did not foresee, and He gave Peter His own divine power and the authority to use it for the sheep, to the end of time. The power to protect, the power to govern, the power to rule are all now in Peter's hands as well as the power to feed. He is the Supreme Shepherd, the infallible Teacher, Christ's Vicar on earth, holding the Keys of His Church in his hands.

Of this Church I am by God's grace a member. When He said to St. Peter: Feed My lambs, He included me. When He said: Shepherd My sheep, He meant that I was to be ruled and governed and taught, corrected and directed by the authority given then to the Head of the Church, given ever since to each one of his 261 successors and distributed by them

amongst the countless under-shepherds who convey the Food and other necessaries to the sheep.

What sort of member of His Church, for which He has made such ample provision, am I ? I can tell approximately by the answer I give to the question the Master asks me too : Lovest *thou* Me ? It is love that He wants from each member. The Church was founded on love and He would not pass on His divine power to the Head till He was sure of his love. From each of His children He makes the same demand : My child give Me thy *heart.* Lovest thou Me ? Before He can trust a member with any little piece of work to do for Him in the fold He must be sure of its love, for the work can be no good unless it is done out of love for Him. Can I be sure of my love, dare I answer with St. Peter : Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee ? It was his humility and contrition which enabled St. Peter to be so sure of his love. He did not resent the humiliation which the Master gave him before the others when He asked him whether he loved Him more than they did. They all knew of his boast and they all knew of his denial. Should we have kept from giving an answer of explanation or excuse ? Peter's humility was real because his contrition was real, and these two dispositions made it impossible for him to give any answer but the one his Master wanted : " Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Colloquy with JESUS Who is asking with each difficulty, each humilitation, each responsibility that presents itself : Lovest thou Me ?

Resolution. To make up my mind once again to accept humiliations in reparation for my sins and that He may know that I love Him.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Lovest *thou* Me ? "

The Third Appearance to the Apostles

TIBERIAS (5)

Tuesday after Second Sunday.

" He said to him the third time : Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me ? Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time : Lovest thou Me ? And he said to Him : Lord, Thou knowest all things : Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him : Feed My sheep." (St. John xxi. 17.)

1*st Prelude.* JESUS asking the question for the third time.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to embrace the cross which love involves.

Point I.—THE QUESTION FOR THE THIRD TIME

Why did the Master put the question for the third time ? Because He had not finished His commission, there was more to come, and for each addition of power He would exact a fresh avowal of love, and of what lay behind it—humility and contrition. We may ourselves have experienced this method of working so essentially divine and so far removed from our human methods. If someone we were intending to entrust with a piece of work to do were to make a false step we should say at once : Oh ! That proves he is not the man for the post !—The divine method is different. Have we not noticed, perhaps more than once, that a blunder, perhaps even a fall, has been permitted just after some new responsibility has been added or just after a call to fresh work in the Master's vineyard, or to a closer intimacy with Himself ? In its distress the soul cries out : Oh ! Why this failure, this humiliation just now ? Why have I allowed myself to fall again just when I wanted to show Thee that I was worthy of Thy trust ? Canst Thou ever believe that I love after this ? And yet I *do* and Thou knowest it.—That is the cry that is precious to the Heart of JESUS ; it was to hear it that He permitted the humiliation or the fall. He wanted to teach the soul that it

can never be *worthy* of His trust, He wanted to hear another avowal of its weakness, its sorrow and its love. *Then* it is a vessel meet for the Master's use, though wholly unfit in its own eyes enlightened by the fall.

" Peter was grieved " because the question was put for the third time. The Master knew he would be. He knew the three-fold question could not fail to recall the threefold denial, and He intended that it should. The Commission was to be in three parts and each part was to be based on Peter's sorrow and acknowledgment of his weakness. Peter was grieved, for his Master did not seem to believe what he had said. What could he do ? What could he say ? How could he prove the love which he knew was strong within him ? He appealed to the ominscience of JESUS : " Lord Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Thou canst look into my heart, everything lies open to Thee, my base denial of Thee three times, my terrible weakness, my sorrow, and as Thou knowest all these things Thou must know also of my love. It was to the Heart of JESUS that he was appealing, and no one ever appealed to that fountain of love and knowledge in vain. It was enough. JESUS was satisfied. He never doubted His Apostle's love, but His Heart thirsted to hear the avowal of it and so He made him say : " I love Thee," three times over. Peter, though he knew it not, was making reparation. Each word that was such an agony to himself was bringing healing to the wounds he had given his Master. " My JESUS I love Thee." It is so easy to say it and yet it is not always the first thing we think of after a fall. If someone who has hurt or offended us comes and says : Oh ! You know I did not mean it, I would not have hurt you for anything if I had thought, I love you far too much—what is the result ? The avowal of love has made reparation, it has put everything all right at once, the wound is healed. The Heart of JESUS is a human heart, and when it has been wounded through our

thoughtlessness. It is longing for an avowal of our love; if only we will just say: I did not mean it, I am so sorry, Thou knowest that I love Thee—everything is right, the wound is healed. It is because we do not yet understand the love of the Sacred Heart that so often after a fall we keep away from Him, we are afraid, we think like naughty children: He will not love me now! To doubt Him thus is to wound Him again and to put ourselves in imminent danger of another and perhaps worse fall! "Peter said to Him: Lord Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Let us do the same. Instead of turning over the fall in our troubled minds which are incapable of judging, wondering whether we are to blame or not, whether we meant to do it or not, whether we consented or only half consented or only a quarter consented, let us turn away from our treacherous selves to God and say: Lord *Thou* knowest all things, and amongst all the miserable things that Thou knowest about me, there is one thing nevertheless that stands out prominently and that is my *love*. "Thou *knowest* that I love Thee." "Love covers a multitude of sins."

Point II.—Feed My Sheep

Jesus was satisfied. The love in the heart of His Apostle had more than made reparation, and He gave him the last part of His Commission. "He said to him: Feed My sheep." Feed My whole flock, the shepherds as well as the sheep, for though the sheep would regard their pastors as shepherds, Peter was to regard them as sheep to be fed. What Christ had been to them, he was now to be, as far as he could. But this feeding of the shepherds by Peter, in other words, the dependence of the Episcopate upon the Papacy is too deep and difficult a matter for us to go into during our Meditation.

The Master had now given the great Commission in its entirety. Peter had been appointed Christ's Vicar on earth,

the Primacy had been conferred, the first Pope had been crowned.

Point III.—The Cross

But Our Lord did not stop here. He had conferred a great honour, imposed a great responsibility, and now they must be marked by the Cross. The honours which He confers always are, and no responsibility can be borne for Him without the cross to support it. Peter was to be His representative on earth, he was to take His place, to do His work, then he must adopt His methods, tread in His steps, love the sheep to the point of being ready to give his life for them, follow his Master unto death, even to the death of the cross; and it is for this that his Master would now prepare him. "Amen, amen, I say to thee: when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and lead thee whether thou wouldest not." St. John explains: "This He said signifying by what death he should glorify God." Peter, and John too, understood very well what the Master meant at the time, but we must remember that John wrote this account some sixty years later, about thirty years after St. Peter's death, so it was natural that for the sake of his readers, he should put in a note to explain what might otherwise be a somewhat obscure passage. Our Lord took as an illustration something that was just at hand as He so often did in His teaching. Standing on the shore He had watched Peter girding himself with his fisher's scarf and swimming to meet Him with outstretched arms; and another picture rose before His eyes—that of an old man in the streets of Rome, bound by his enemies, and being led off to have his arms stretched out on a cross like his Master. It is this same Peter, Christ's first Vicar, going to give his life for the sheep. He is young and strong now on this morning by the lake, he had got life before him, a life of tireless zeal for the work entrusted to him, but Our Lord

warns him of what will happen at the end if he loves the sheep and is faithful to his Master's charge.

"*By what kind of death he should glorify God.*" All who work for the Master must glorify God by some kind of death. Many of Christ's Vicars have laid down their lives for the sheep, and countless numbers of the sheep too have glorified God by a martyr's death. Though all are not called upon thus to glorify Him, there must be for all who tread in the Master's steps and try, in however small a way, to represent Him, a death to self, without which it is impossible to glorify God. It was the death which St. John the Baptist endured all his life long and which he summed up in the words: "I must decrease" (St. John iii. 30)—a harder death than being beheaded in the prison. St. Paul was beheaded too, and his death was precious to God, but not so precious as was that other death of his which he describes so pathetically: "I die daily." (1 Cor. xv. 31.) This is the death by which we can if we will, glorify God every day of our lives by doing some little thing to help to put self to death and to make more room for Christ. And when He wants something done in His Kingdom, it is more likely that He will give the privilege of doing it to one who is full of the Master and His interests than to one who is full of self and its interests. Lovest thou Me?—All turns on the answer we are giving to this question. If we really love, self will take its proper place, not a very high one, and the Master will find in us co-workers to whom He can safely confide His work.

Colloquy with the "Chief Shepherd" Who has made such ample provision for His flock.

Resolution. To do something to-day to cause self to die and thus to prove my love.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Lord Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee."

The Third Appearance to the Apostles

TIBERIAS (6)

Friday after Second Sunday.

"And when He had said this, He saith to him: Follow Me . . . What is it to thee? Follow thou Me." (St. John xxi. 19, 22.)

1*st Prelude.* JESUS walking away and Peter and John following.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to follow closely.

Point I.—"WHAT IS IT TO THEE?"

While Peter was thinking over his Master's solemn words and looking on to the end when another should gird him and lead him where he would not, JESUS, Who was then moving away, said to him: "Follow Me," as though He would say: I have laid a heavy responsibility upon you, I have made great demands on your love and I have said hard things to you about the Cross, but if you follow Me all will be well, there is no need to look ahead either at the responsibility or at the cross, just follow Me day by day, do what I tell you to do, and try to do it as I do it, never lose sight of the fact that you are taking My place on earth, doing My work for Me, and then, when the time comes, it will be quite natural for you to follow Me even unto the end—even unto the death of the cross.

The principle is the same for all His followers. If we follow closely day by day, passing our responsibility on to Him, loving Him and all He arranges always, treading in His steps and doing His work, the death to self will become a habit—a second nature.

Peter got up too, when he saw his Master moving away and followed Him; turning round he saw his friend John following also, and he said to JESUS: "Lord and what shall this man do?" You have told me of my life's work and told me about my death, now I should like to know the history of my friend's

life, and what is going to happen to him. It was a very natural piece of curiosity, but JESUS did not satisfy it: "If I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me." That is: Even if I intended him to have an extraordinary—a miraculous life, even if all I could tell you about him would be most interesting, it would not matter to you, you have your work to do and your orders to follow. "Follow thou Me." Do not spend precious time and energy on useless questionings and surmisings about other people and what they are going to do. All these interfere with the close following of Me which I require of you.

It is a lesson of which we all need to remind ourselves—to let alone the things that do not concern us or our work for the Master. What He says to each one is: Follow *thou* Me, and He tells us just how He wants us to do it. He has different ways and methods for others, all are not called to go by the same path, and it is not for us to pry into their ways and methods. Their devotions for example, do not appeal to us, what does that matter? They are not on that account any less pleasing to the Master. "We saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him!" "Forbid him not," the Master answers, "for he that is not against you is for you." (St. Mark ix. 37–39.) Curiosity about our fellow-workers or their methods of working is dangerously near to criticism. Let us remember our Master's injunctions and we shall be saved from many pit-falls into which workers in God's vineyard often fall: "What is it to thee?" "Forbid him not." "Follow thou Me."

Point II.—"THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED"

Let us turn our thoughts now to Ephesus where a very old man, some sixty years later, is publishing the beautiful story upon which we have been meditating this week. Never can he forget those scenes of his youth which were connected with his beloved Master; the world has changed since then,

Jerusalem has been destroyed, the Mosaic Law has disappeared, he has himself founded seven different churches in Asia Minor (Apoc. i.–iii.) and heresies are already rife there; he has witnessed a good confession in Rome where at the Emperor's bidding he was thrown into a pot of boiling oil; he has been banished to the Isle of Patmos (where he wrote his Apocalypse) and now he is back again in Ephesus where he will end his days and be buried; an old man, so old, St. Jerome tells us, that he had to be carried into church where he had but one thing to say: "Little children love one another;" and when the faithful asked him why he always said the same thing, he said: "Because it is the command of the Lord and if this is kept it is enough." Anything to do with his Master he could not forget; and so he has given us many details of the Master's doings which the other Evangelists say nothing about, and more of His sayings than perhaps all of them put together. At the time he wrote, probably all the rest of the little group who witnessed the third appearance of Our Lord were dead; his brother James was put to death with the sword shortly after the Master's Ascension and Peter had been crucified some thirty years ago; but John had probably told the story over and over again and no detail was forgotten by him. He remembered the long walk from Jerusalem to Galilee without the Master, but in obedience to His order; he remembered St. Peter's declaration: "I go a-fishing;" he remembered the long fruitless night and the big haul in the morning; he remembered the rapturous moment when he recognized the man standing on the shore to be his beloved Master; he remembered the fire and the breakfast prepared by the Master's own Hands, and the exact number of fish caught and that they were "great"; he heard his friend being questioned by the Master and he knew the agony it was to him, *he* knew too that Peter loved his Master in spite of everything; he saw the Primacy being conferred upon him; he, with Peter, followed JESUS when He moved away from the fire—yes he remembered

it all as if it were only yesterday that it happened—and he heard Peter ask: "Lord and what shall this man do?" He explained that "this man" was "the disciple whom JESUS loved," (he loved to recall that!) that he was the one who "leaned on His breast at supper" (another thing he loved to recall!) and said: "Lord, who is he that shall betray Thee?" He remembered the painful things as well as the pleasant, anything that had to do with his Master. When he heard Peter questioning Our Lord about himself, how anxiously he must have listened for the answer! It came at once: "If I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?" From this answer, he tells us, the brethren supposed he would never die, and probably over and over again he had told them that JESUS did not mean that at all; but it was no use, they firmly believed it, and now that he was so old they thought all the more that it was true, and even after he was buried they could not give up their cherished tradition: "John but sleepeth in his sepulchre," they said, "there he waiteth the coming of the Lord, and the clouds of dust whirling above his grave bear testimony that a living breath ever quickened his ashes." Now John refutes this supposition for the last time and leaves it on record: "JESUS did not say to him: He should not die, but: If I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee?" Still, though neither Peter nor John learned from Our Lord what was going to happen, His answer cannot have been without consolation to the "Beloved disciple." "If I will have him to remain." How completely his future was in the Master's Hands! Whatever happened to him, it would only be what the Master *would have* for him, and it was no one else's concern but the Master's. He would Himself arrange each step of his long life for the disciple whom He loved. How this thought must have strengthened St. John to meet all the difficulties of his life! When the death of the holy Mother left his home desolate, he knew it was what the Master *would have*; when he was kept

waiting so long for the Master's last call—a special trial to one who knew as much about Heaven as did the writer of the Apocalypse—it was all right, it was because JESUS "*would have* him to remain." This little word of the Master, prompted by Peter's interest for his friend, was probably one of the things which conduced to the great love he bore his Master and which made him tell his children that love was the only thing that mattered.

It is true for me too, if I am a true disciple of JESUS. I am always safe and all is always right because all that happens to me is what JESUS *will have* for me.

Colloquy with JESUS Who is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

Resolution. To believe that each thing that happens to me to-day is what JESUS *will have* for me.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Follow thou Me."

The Public Appearance in Galilee (1)

Saturday after Second Sunday.

"*Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee. There they shall see Me.*" And they "*went into Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing Him they adored but some doubted.*" (St. Matt. xxviii. 10, 16, 17.)

1*st Prelude.* The gathering of more than five hundred brethren on the mountain appointed.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to be always where JESUS appoints.

Point I.—THE MEETING BY APPOINTMENT

The only other appearance of Christ in Galilee mentioned in the Gospel story was one of great importance; there was no disguise about it, it was neither secret nor hidden, not just to one person only nor to a few, it was an appointment made

by JESUS with all the brethren; He spoke of it before He suffered: "After I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee;" (St. Mark xiv. 28) the angels reminded the Holy Women of it at the Sepulchre: "Behold He will go before you into Galilee, there you shall see Him;" (St. Matt. xxviii. 7) and JESUS Himself told them to spread abroad the news of His appointment: "Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee. There they shall see Me." (verse 10.) It was a very important meeting and is mentioned by St. Matthew, (xxviii. 16–20) St. Mark (xvi. 15–18) and it is probably to it that St. Luke alludes (chap. xxiv. 44–49) and also St. Paul when he says: "Then He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once." (1 Cor. xv. 6) Beyond the fact that it was on a "mountain in Galilee" (St. Matthew) we do not know where this meeting was held, nor do we know *when*, but it is probable that, as soon as the Paschal days were over and the faithful could leave Jerusalem, they would go back to Galilee in obedience to Our Lord's command, and that they all knew exactly when and where they were to see the Master, Who had Himself made this appointment with them. Perhaps one reason why time and place are not mentioned is that the faithful would keep it secret among themselves for fear of the Jews. Peter and some of the Apostles had already arrived as we have seen, the women led by the Holy Mother would take more time for the journey, but it probably was not long after the night spent on the Lake of Tiberias, that the day of the great meeting arrived. He wanted them *all* to see Him, and so He gave the opportunity—yea, the command—to all. He knew how much they would all wish to see Him, especially after they had heard of the favoured ones who had done so; and also He wanted them all to be witnesses to the fact of His Resurrection.

And so they all came—those who had been up to Jerusalem for the Feast and had had their share in all that had taken place there, and those who had stayed at home in Galilee,

(chiefly women and children). How full of joy and wonder their hearts must have been at the prospect of seeing the Prophet of Galilee risen from the dead ! How like Him it was to think of everybody and to make this appointment with them so that none would be left out ! What a lesson to them and to us in consideration for the feelings of others. He never forgets the least of His brethren, and when *we* remember them, He counts it as a remembrance of Himself, to such an extent does He love them and identify Himself with them.

Point II.—JESUS KEEPS HIS APPOINTMENT

The hour appointed has come ; they are all there—the Holy Mother, the Eleven, the Seventy who had been His Forerunners in " every place whither He Himself was to come," (St. Luke x. 1) the ministering women, the people He had taught and loved for three years, the little children He had taken in His arms and blessed, those whose diseases He had cured, those whom He had raised from the dead, those who were lame and could now walk, who were blind and could now see by His almighty power. They all knew JESUS of Nazareth, many of them had seen Him die the death of a malefactor on Good Friday, and it was only since then that some of them had become His " brethren " ; they all knew of the empty tomb and had all heard stories of His Resurrection, some had talked with those who had seen Him alive, and each one had had a special message from the Master to say that they should see Him on this mountain.

Suddenly He was in the midst of them and was " seen by more than five hundred brethren at once." " And seeing Him they adored, but some doubted." (St. Matthew) Those who had already seen Him—the Holy Mother, the Eleven, the holy women, the two who had walked to Emmaus with Him, and perhaps others *adored* Him the moment He appeared, but some were not quite sure yet that it was He, or perhaps they were dazzled and awe-struck by the unexpected beauty of

the Resurrection Body. Then JESUS approaching spoke to them, and they saw and believed that it was He ; their doubts were gone

So does He come to us on the mountain appointed—in the work, the people, the difficulties, the trouble that He has Himself appointed. At first we do not recognize Him, we doubt whether it is He, but as He approaches—comes near to us, He makes us feel that it is Himself and we adore Him. There is no chance about anything, all is appointed, He will always be there, for He never fails to keep His appointments. He never contemplated our being alone on the mountain ; He would not have brought us into such difficult passes if He had not meant to come Himself to help us through them. Then let us adore Him by bravely going forth to keep our appointments. He will be there. What more do we want ?

Point III.—WHAT HE SAID TO THEM

We can imagine Him going about speaking to one and another, saying again : " Peace be to you ! See, it is I Myself " ; calming their fears, dispelling their doubts, satisfying their curiosity, showing them His Wounds and filling them with His love. Then He gave them His last public discourse, St. Luke tells us some of the things He said. (chap. xxiv. 44–49.) He reminded them of the things He had said to them while He was yet with them ; He " opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures," He turned on the full light of the *Lumen Christi*—of the Paschal Candle, the Resurrection light, showing them how all had now been fulfilled that was written in all three divisions of the Sacred Scriptures—Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. They knew these well enough, but they did not understand them, the Resurrection was the key and the Master showed them how to use it, just as He had shown Cleophas and his companion. He showed them how necessary it was that all these things that had been written should be fulfilled, that " thus it behoved

the Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day." He made everything quite clear to them—why He had to die and how His Resurrection had set the seal to all the prophecies.

He told them also that penance and remission of sins were now to be preached in His Name unto *all nations*, that is to the Gentiles, and that they were to begin at Jerusalem; that they were never to forget that they were His witnesses, that their strength lay in the fact that they could speak of the things they had *seen*.

In saying all this to the five hundred brethren, JESUS founded the lay Apostolate for both men and women. Repentance of sin was the one message that He wanted given in His Name. He had died to win it, and now everyone who was sorry for his sin, whether Jew or Gentile, could be forgiven. Tell them then to repent of their sins and tell them about the remission of them, explain to them that I have left power with My Eleven here to forgive sins in My Name, and that as long as the Church remains, that power will remain with it. To encourage them in their work He added: "And I send the promise of My Father upon you."

Let me look a little more closely at the Master's directions for the lay Apostolate, for they concern me very nearly:—

(1) "*Ye are witnesses.*" That is why the Master commissioned them. It was because they had been with Him and followed Him, had listened to His teaching and believed in His death and Resurrection. It is essential for anyone who would be an apostle—that is "one sent" by the Master, in however humble a way—that he should be *a witness*, he must speak of what he knows by his own experience, of what he has seen for himself and therefore thoroughly believes. This does not mean that we must not set a high standard before others because we find we can only attain to a low one ourselves, but it means that we are striving ourselves after all that we counsel them—not necessarily succeeding; if

all apostles had to be perfect themselves in all they taught, there would not be many lessons given ! *Witnesses*—those who have seen much with the eye of faith and who, though fully conscious of their own shortcomings, yet long to make others see what they have seen.

(2) *Penance and remission of sins.* Repentance, contrition, forgiveness of sins and reparation—this is the one message. It was what everyone, both Jew and Gentile, had need of at the beginning of the Church's history, it is the great need of to-day and will be to the end ; and so He is always sending His witnesses out with the same message. Let us keep close to it in our dealings with souls—for the sinner, repentance and confession, giving Heaven no rest till that particular one is brought back, using all the means within our power—and perhaps the chief means for the lay Apostolate are the secret ones of prayer and penance—and then when the lost sheep is safely folded—contrition and reparation ; there will be enough here to occupy it for the rest of its life ; and it is by means of these, too, that the apostle will *keep* the lost sheep folded.

(3) The *promise of the Father*—the Holy Spirit. The lay apostle must be in the state of grace, must have the Holy Spirit residing within him ; and every soul in the state of grace must be an apostle in some way or other, always attracting others by his *example*, always storming Heaven by his *prayers*—the two methods which are absolutely safe ; and sometimes, relying wholly on " the Promise of the Father " for a method which if adopted rashly may easily do more harm than good, by the direct attack of his *words*.

Colloquy with the Master about the duties He has appointed for me to-day.

Resolution. To carry out His Commission faithfully.

Spiritual Bouquet. " You are witnesses."

The Public Appearance in Galilee (2)

Third Sunday after Easter.

"All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." (St. Matt. xxviii. 18–20.)

1*st Prelude.* Jesus addressing Himself to the Eleven.
2*nd Prelude.* Gratitude for all the provision He made for His Church.

Point I.—The Commission to make Disciples

Having finished His discourse Jesus now turns to the Eleven and before the whole assembly invests them with His own power and gives them their Commission. This Commission to the Eleven and their successors—to the universal Church—was given publicly, that all might know what it was and with whom it rested.

"*All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth,*" to Me as the Word Incarnate. St. Paul tells us that it was *because* He humbled Himself to take the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of men, and still more because He humbled Himself unto death even to the death of the cross, that God exalted Him and gave Him power so great "that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth." (Phil. ii. 6–10.) This supernatural power He now passes on to the eleven Apostles. "*Going, therefore, make disciples of all nations.*" "*Therefore*"—in the strength of the power that I give you, go and get others to follow Me, this is to be the work of the Church to the end of time, to bring men to the feet of Jesus that they may take up their cross and become His disciples. St. Mark says: "Go ye into the whole world and *preach the gospel* to every creature," herald the glad tidings of

My birth and life and death and so get them to be My disciples, and then baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Enrol them as members of the great Society presided over by the Blessed Trinity. "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,*" faith is necessary to salvation, but the water of Baptism is necessary also. "He saved us by the laver of regeneration" St. Paul says (Titus iii. 5). Our Lord had explained it all before to Nicodemus, so the Apostles knew well what He meant and were not surprised at the great stress laid on Baptism: "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of *water* and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (St. John iii. 5.) "But *he that believeth not*" after he has had the chance, he that rejects deliberately the glad tidings, "*shall be condemned.*" (St. Mark xvi. 16.)

Point II.—The Commission to Teach

"*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" When, through the proclaiming of the glad tidings, a disciple had been made and enrolled, then he must be taught. Teaching them to observe *all things* that relate to the new kingdom of which they have become members—all the things that He had commanded them in general during the three years' ministry and in particular during the forty days in which He spoke to them of the Kingdom of God (Acts i. 3), things regarding their faith, their behaviour as disciples, and the Sacraments, for a convert always has more to learn after he has been made a member of the Church than he learnt before.

"*Whatsoever I have commanded you.*" There was the curriculum for the new scholars. All the lessons that the Apostles had learned during their three years' training with the Master, they were now to pass on to all who would listen; the sayings of Jesus, with which their minds and hearts were stored, were not for themselves only. They were His chosen

witnesses to make known to the world His life and death and resurrection, His teaching, His commandments, His words. And how conscious they were of the fact that they were His *witnesses* and what stress they laid upon it, we have only to read the Acts of the Apostles to see.

To help the world to receive them as witnesses and to believe that their power to administer the Sacraments was a supernatural one and bestowed a supernatural gift, Our Lord gave the gift of miracles. "These signs shall follow them that believe." As soon as they believed and were baptized they were able to work miracles. It was a power given to the Universal Church and it has never been recalled: "In My Name they shall cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." (St. Mark xvi. 17, 18.) In the Acts of the Apostles we find not only the Apostles, but Deacons, (chap. viii. 6, 7) and the laity too (chap. xix. 6) working miracles.

Having given His public charge to the Universal Church and having shown them that all the necessary power was vested in the Apostles and their successors Our Lord next shows them where they will find their consolation and their strength.

Point III.—The Strength to carry out the Commission

"*Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.*" His Church then was to last as long as the world lasted; the commission to make disciples by preaching and teaching and giving the Sacraments was to go on right to the end, and He Himself would always be there. This again is a promise made to the Universal Church. Christ will Himself be with it all the days. He was thinking of all the members of His flock. "Not for them (the Apostles) only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me." (St. John xvii. 20.)

"*All days*" I am with you. Could any promise be more sufficient, more far-reaching, more consoling? The Church was never to be alone, its Founder was always to be with it, teaching through it, and Himself making disciples of all nations through His representatives. His sensible presence was to be withdrawn very shortly from them and they were to stay in the city till another Paraclete came Who was to take His place. "It is expedient to you that I go," He had already explained to them, "for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you." (St. John xvi. 7.) His work on earth was finished by His death and Resurrection. He was no longer a mortal man and could no longer dwell with them as He had done, that dispensation was over and the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, Who was to be the soul of the visible Church of which He was the Head, was about to begin.

"*All days*" I am with you. He meant something more still. The Apostles knew what He meant, for He had already on the day before He died, given them the power to keep their Master with them. He had already given Himself to them as the Food that was to guard their souls "unto eternal life," and He had told them to give that mysterious Food to the faithful; He had shown them a plan by which all who would, might find Him and commune with Him; "all days, even to the consummation of the world," the Prisoner of love would ever be with them on their Altars.

These promises were made to the Universal Church and to each member of it. He is with us by His grace from the moment of our Baptism till we force Him to leave us by our sin; with us again by the Sacrament of Penance; with us as our Food in Holy Communion; with us in the Tabernacle; always with us, making converts, baptizing, teaching, absolving, feeding, by the hands of His representatives, who hold His power and work ceaselessly for their Head.

What a glorious meeting that was on the mountain appointed! And how nearly it concerns me! What a provision

He made for His Church ! And I am a member of it. Let me thank Him once more for His goodness, and let me pray more earnestly than ever for the spread of His Kingdom. No wonder He is so anxious about it ! No wonder He told us whenever we pray to say : " Thy Kingdom come ! " Each member of the Church, however humble and unworthy, has a responsibility in this matter, and to fulfil it is the best way of showing gratitude.

" But stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high." They were to leave Galilee now that the great meeting was over and go back to Jerusalem, where their mission was to begin, and wait there till all these wonderful powers were confirmed in them by the coming of the Holy Ghost. This order was specially given to the Eleven, (Acts i. 2–4) but all who were free to do so would naturally go back too. We know that the Holy Mother did so and the ministering women and some of the brethren and that they numbered a hundred and twenty by the time that the actual waiting time between the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost arrived. (verses 13–15)

Thus the Master ordered every little detail for them, as He does for us still ; a place and a certain piece of work are appointed, and then we are told to leave and go to another and stay there for further orders. It is Christ in His Church teaching, guiding, commanding the members in every circumstance and detail of their lives, " *all days.*"

Colloquy with the Master Who, though I see Him not, directs all my steps because I am a member of His Church.

Resolution. Never to rebel against His commands but be always in the place appointed.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Behold I am with you all days."

The Appearance to James

Monday after third Sunday.

" After that He was seen by James." (1 Cor. xv. 7.)

1*st Prelude.* Our Lord appearing to James.
2*nd Prelude.* The grace of humility.

Point I.—Private Interviews

We cannot leave out the appearance to St. James because St. Paul specially mentions it. "*After that*," that is, after the public appearance in Galilee to more than five hundred brethren at once, " He was seen by James." So it was probably after they were back again in Judea that James had his special interview.

It was not to James the brother of John that St. Paul was alluding—he had been dead 14 years when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians—but to St. James *the Less*, (St. Mark xv. 40) the son of Alpheus (otherwise Cleophas who was brother of St. Joseph), and of Mary who was a sister of the Lord's Mother (St. Luke vi. 15. Matt. xxvii. 56. John xix. 25). He was a near relative of Our Lord and is called by St. Paul " the brother (that is cousin) of the Lord." (Gal. i. 19). It was he who was chosen to be the first Bishop of Jerusalem and he held the post for thirty years, till his martyrdom at the age of ninety-six. He is also the author of " The Catholic Epistle of St. James the Apostle," and from it we may learn how deeply he was imbued with the mind of Christ. He is spoken of by St. Paul as one of the " pillars " of the Church, (Gal. ii. 9) and it was he who decided what discipline was to be exercised in regard to the Gentiles. (Acts xv. 15–33.)

We need not suppose that St. James was *specially* favoured by the appearance of Our Lord to him. He probable saw all

His Apostles separately during the forty days; the lives of all of them lay open to the Master and just as He had warned St. Peter of the death by which he was to glorify God, so He would warn the others of difficulties ahead and give each the special formation that his special character and career needed. We may be sure that He left no need of His "little flock" unsupplied.

It is quite natural that St. Paul should select the appearance to St. James for special mention, for he was still living when the Epistle to the Corinthians was written and, from the important position he held, he was of special interest to all Christians. Many of the Christians at Corinth no doubt knew him well from their visits to the holy city, and his being a near relative of the Master would enhance their interest in him.

But of what interest is it to *me* to know that Our Lord appeared to St. James? Just this—that "He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever," that He is just as ready now to help and warn of difficulties and to train His workers as He was of old. He loves private interviews with His children and is always waiting for them. The matter no longer rests with *Him*, as it did during the great forty days, but with *them*. I have only to go to Him, He will always receive me at once and during the interview He will train me and prepare me and do what He wills with me, without my being aware perhaps of what is going on.

Have I had any private interviews with the Master this Easter-tide? It is possible to make a Meditation every day without having them; it is possible to get through much spiritual reading without having them. Let me stop and think. Do not let me be selfish and use the precious time of Meditation and of Visits to the Blessed Sacrament for myself and my own spiritual enjoyment. I am there for Him and His interests, let me look after these, let me be still and listen to what He has to say to me. *He* will look after my interests. I need not be afraid.

Point II.—" God Resisteth the Proud and giveth Grace to the Humble "

These words are quoted both by St. Peter (I. v. 5) and St. James (chap. iv. 6) the only two of the Eleven of whose private interviews with Our Lord there is any record. St. Peter told the others at once that he had seen the Lord ; his testimony of the Resurrection was necessary, for none of the others believed then that He had risen ; but when James saw Him, after the public appearance in Galilee, there was no need to give further testimony to the Brethren—they had all seen and all believed. So we find in St. James another instance of the humility of the Saints which makes them always desire to keep their secrets for their King. It was only long afterwards that he told St. Paul about it and so we have it mentioned in his list of the appearances. May it not have been this very humility which attracted Our Lord ? We know how it does attract. God resisteth the proud but He cannot resist the humble. " To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little and of a contrite spirit." (Is. lxvi. 2.) Mary rejoiced in spirit because God her Saviour " had regarded the humility of His Handmaid." " Draw nigh to God " says St. James, " and He will draw nigh to you." (chap. iv. 8). He spoke from experience.

If I would have Jesus draw nigh to me this Easter-tide I must attract Him by my humility.

Our Lord recently told a Visitation Nun [1]—and He told her to write it down for the benefit of others—that when a soul is called to converse with God it ought to clothe itself in *humility* as God is clothed with glory ; and when she asked how she could do this He gave her three methods : (1) Never to judge anybody. (2) To regard oneself as the servant of all. (3) To be always ready to acknowledge oneself in the wrong

[1] Soeur Benigna Consolata Ferrero, 1885-1916.

If I want to know where I am with regard to humility I cannot do better than examine myself by these three tests; they may help me to answer the question which I often ask myself: How is it that I find it so difficult to converse with God? It is probably want of humility—in other words it is due to *self*. St. James gives good advice in his Catholic Epistle which shows that these three rules of conduct are no new ones:—

(1) "Detract not one another, my brethren." (iv. 11.) "Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?" (iv. 13.)

(2) "Be ye not many *masters*." (iii. 1.)

(3) "Confess your sins one to another." (v. 16.) "In many things we all offend." (iii. 2.)

Point III.—St. James' Likeness to Our Lord

Tradition says that he bore a physical resemblance to Our Lord, but whether or no that was true he resembled Him in spirit. Such was his reputation for holiness when he was Bishop of Jerusalem that the Jews took him for the Messias. We are told that he touched neither meat nor wine and that his knees were like leather from his constant kneeling. It was because he faithfully persisted in bearing witness that Jesus was the Son of God, that the Jews stoned him and then took him up to one of the pinnacles of the Temple and threw him to the ground; he was still living and praying like his Master: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," when his persecutors dispatched him with clubs. "You have condemned and put to death the Just One and He resisted you not," James says in speaking of his Master. (chap. v. 6) What was true of the Master was true of the servant too. He also was called the Just and when all the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem came upon the Jews they thought it was a judgment on them, not for having put Jesus to death, but for having put to death such a great saint as the Bishop of Jerusalem.

St. Jerome says that before Our Lord's Ascension He commended the Church of Jerusalem to the care of St. James and that is why he was chosen for its first Bishop. It may have been during His private appearance to James that He gave him his special directions for this special work which he carried out so faithfully till like his Master he laid down his life for the flock committed to his care.

In his love and fidelity and devotion to duty even unto death he resembled his Master. If we would have further points of resemblance let us look for them in his Catholic Epistle—his Epistle for *all* and therefore for us, and see what he has to say about the poor and God's love for them, about the "royal law": Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, about being merciful, about envy and contention, about peacemakers, about prayer, humility, submission of the will, patience, zeal and lastly about the blessedness of those who suffer evil and endure.

Truly had James caught the spirit of the Master for Whom he lived and died, and we may end our Meditation by applying to him his own words:

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love him." (chap. i. 12.)

Colloquy with St. James asking him to help us to value our opportunities for private interviews with the Master.

Resolution. "Thy face O Lord will I still seek." (Ps. xxvi. 8.)

Spiritual Bouquet. "I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me." (St. John xx. 18.)

The Appearance on Mount Olivet

Tuesday after third Sunday.

"*Then* (*He was seen*) *by all the Apostles.*" (1 Cor. xv. 7.)
"*And He led them out as far as Bethania, and lifting up His Hands He blessed them.*" (St. Luke xxiv. 50.)

1*st Prelude.* Jesus walking towards Bethania with His little flock.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to follow wherever He leads.

Point I.—The Last Meeting

We come now to the last appearance before His Ascension—that on Mount Olivet, on the fortieth day after His Resurrection. "He led them *out.*" They were probably assembled all together in the Supper room, all who could do so had come back from Galilee; the Feast of Pentecost was nigh and they had been told to wait at Jerusalem. This last gathering also was most likely by appointment. "All the Apostles" were there, including Matthias. (Acts i. 23) Our Lady was there with the ministering women, and many others of His faithful disciples. Once more they sat together with Him in the Upper Room, hallowed already by so many memories. Then He rose up and solemnly led them out *towards* Bethania, they did not get as far as Bethania for it is on the opposite slope of the Mount of Olives, and they stopped on Mount Olivet, the highest peak, which was "within a sabbath's day journey" (less than a mile) from Jerusalem. (Acts i. 12.)

"He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out; He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice." (St. John x. 3, 4.) When He said this to them long ago, "they understood not what He spoke to them," (ver. 6) but they understood better now; they had seen their Shepherd lay down His life for the sheep; they had proved His words: "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again;" (ver. 18) all had come true just as He

said. They had heard Him charge Peter to tend and feed His flock. They had had " many proofs " ; for forty days He had been constantly appearing to them and speaking of the Kingdom of God ; they were not deceived, they were His own sheep, it was the Good Shepherd Who was leading them out, leading them out to a cross which would indeed have been insupportable had He not been with them, and the sheep followed Him *because they knew* His voice.

He may be leading me out to a cross this Easter, but if it is so, I can have no hesitation about following Him, He has given me so " many proofs "of His goodness and His love, I know His Voice so well. Who else would call me so distinctly by my name ? I cannot but follow, and follow *closely*, so that when the cross is reached I shall be near Him, my " Good Shepherd " Who, though the cross is over for Him, still bears it in each one of His children, for He carrieth our sorrows. (Is. liii. 4.)

Point II.—The Last Conversation

There is something strange and solemn about last moments with those we love. We know that we may never see them again. Our hearts are torn with grief and we can find little to say ; yet we think to ourselves the moments are passing, when they are over I shall wish I had said this or asked that and so often we say something that is quite irrelevant—even trite ; but it does not seem to matter and the loved one understands that the words are only spoken as a sort of relief to the tension, and are but another proof of the greatness of the love which can cause such grief.

This thought perhaps explains to some extent the question His friends asked Him as they walked : " Lord wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? " It seems impossible that their minds could really have been on the restoration of their temporal kingdom at this solemn moment

when time was so short and so precious. For forty days He had been speaking to them of the Kingdom He had come to set up; He had made them His ministers in it and had taught them how to govern it and given them its constitutions; but in their sorrow they hark back to the question which was always an important one in the mind of every Jew, though they knew quite well now that whatever they may have *hoped*, their Master's Kingdom was "not of this world."

Our Lord answers them with a general principle which will be useful for all time: "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power." There are many questions about the future which we should like to know all about; but Our Lord says: No, it is not for you to know them, the present is enough for you, trust the future to Me. Be so taken up with the things of My Kingdom —My Father's business, that it absorbs all your time and thoughts and affections. And what about the times and moments which we cannot help thinking about and dreading? They are all safe—"the Father hath put (them) in His power." Need we trouble, need we be anxious, need we look forward? Each moment is in His powerful Hands and can bring nothing but what He permits. Let us leave them there in perfect confidence and peace, occupying ourselves only with the moments He gives us to-day, holding His hand all the while and knowing that it can contain nothing but good for His children.

Then, for their consolation and strength, He reminds them of the Holy Ghost Who is coming "not many days hence," to give them the *power* which He had promised should be theirs, the power which He had received from His Father; and then once again He speaks of the great work He is leaving them to do: "You shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) A great and far-reaching commission which is still being carried out by His witnesses.

His last words, then, were for His world-wide Kingdom. "The God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom" Daniel had prophesied. (Dan. ii. 44.) "His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed. The saints of the most high God shall take the Kingdom and they shall possess the Kingdom for ever and ever." (chap. vii. 14, 18.) This is the Kingdom He came to set up, the Kingdom of which I am a member and for the spread of which He bids me pray always: "Thy Kingdom come!"

Point III.—The Last Blessing

"And lifting up His Hands He blessed them, and it came to pass whilst He blessed them He departed from them and was carried up to Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God." (St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51 and St. Mark xvi. 19.) It was His last appearance—they knew as they knelt to receive His blessing that they should see Him no more, for even as He blessed them He was raised up from the ground and they adoring, watched till the clouds hid Him from their sight.

What next? We should expect uncontrollable grief, desolation, sorrow, helplessness. Not so—a vision of angels who assured them that their Master was already in Heaven, and then the going back into Jerusalem *with great joy* into their loved upper room where they persevered with one mind in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus. They realized that their treasure was in Heaven and where their treasure was there their hearts were also, and so they raised up their hearts and minds to their Master Who had just left them. They felt that He was still blessing them, still with them as He had promised, that they had much to do for Him and that there was no time to lose. The Holy Ghost was soon coming to give them all the necessary power, and while they were waiting they kept near to the Mother of Jesus and with her basked

in the sunshine of His presence, that is what " persevering in prayer " means. They put all sad thoughts away, they were continually in the temple " praising and blessing God " (St. Luke xxiv. 53) for all His goodness to them. They realized that their union with their Risen Lord would now be unbroken, it was no longer a case of *appearances* merely, He was ever with them. No wonder their joy was so great !

And what about mine ? As Easter-tide is passing is my joy becoming greater, and is it caused by the fact that my union with Him is daily becoming closer, that I have only to raise my heart and mind to Him and then I am with Him at once, that He is with me all the days for all the work He has given me to do, that though He leads me out often to the cross, even that is a joy because *He* is leading me ? Am I persevering in prayer in spite of many obstacles, trying to realize more and more how simple it is, just waiting in His presence with Mary His Mother, waiting for all the gifts which He has promised and talking to Him about the work He has given me to do and the difficulties and joys connected with it, and praising Him for all He is to me ?

" Your sorrow will be turned into joy." It was true for the Apostles, and it will be true for me too if I act as the Apostles did.

Colloquy with my Risen Lord Who is ever with me in the Tabernacle.

Resolution. To persevere in prayer to-day.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Seek the things that are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." (Col. iii. 1.)

The Appearance to St. Paul

Wednesday after third Sunday.

" And last of all He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time ; for I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle because I persecuted the Church of God." (1 Cor. xv. 8, 9.)

" To this end have I appeared to thee that I may make thee a minister and a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things wherein I will appear to thee." (Acts xxvi. 16.)

1*st Prelude.* Our Lord appearing to St. Paul on the way to Damascus.
2*nd Prelude.* To say with St. Paul : " Lord what wilt Thou have me to do ? "

Point I.—His Conversion

It was not during the great forty days, but some five or six years after the Holy Spirit had been given, that Our Lord appeared to St. Paul. He appeared to him in His glorious Resurrection Body, just as really as He had appeared to the others. He was " called to be an Apostle " and therefore it was as necessary for him to be a witness of the Resurrection as for them. " Thou shalt be His witness to all men of those things which thou hast seen and heard," Ananias said to him. (Acts xxii. 15) For six years he had been persecuting the infant Church, but he did it ignorantly thinking verily that he was doing God service. (1 Tim. i. 13.) All this time the watchful Eye of Jesus had been upon him. He was already a vessel of election, " separated " from his mother's womb (Gal. i. 15), though he was " breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples " (Acts ix. 1) till the moment came when it pleased God " to reveal His Son." (Gal. i. 16.) Our Lord wanted yet another Apostle, one who should " carry His name before the Gentiles," (Acts ix. 15) and He would call him and appoint him Himself as He had done

the others. And so He suddenly appeared to him in all the beauty and dazzling brightness of His Resurrection Body. Although it was mid-day, the blazing Eastern sun paled before the *Lumen Christi*. Paul fell to the ground blinded by the sight. Then came the gentle question from the Master close to him though he could no longer see Him with his bodily eyes: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And the quick answer from a soul that believed already: "Who art Thou Lord?" And again the gentle patient voice: "I am JESUS of Nazareth Whom thou persecutest," JESUS of Nazareth Whom you have heard so much about, Who went about doing good, Who died on the cross, and Who rose again from the dead—yes, it is all quite true, I am standing by you now in my Resurrection Body, as I stood so often by my Apostles after I had risen, and now they are spreading the glad tidings of my death and Resurrection and *you* are persecuting those who believe their story—persecuting *Me*, for they are the members of My mystical Body and I am the Head.

It was a personal interview between the new Apostle and his Lord; "they that were with me saw indeed the light but they heard not the voice of Him that spoke with me." (chap. xxii. 7–9.) The shock of finding that all his zeal was misdirected and that he was altogether on the wrong path was very great and he turned naturally and simply with the question: What shall I do, Lord? I am ready to do anything you suggest. Then the Lord told him to continue his journey to Damascus and that there he would be told of all the things that he must do. So they led him like a little child (for he had suddenly become a child of the Kingdom) to Damascus and after three days of fasting and blindness—blessed days no doubt of communion with is Master—Ananias came and gave him back his sight and gave him also this wonderful message: "The Lord JESUS hath sent me, He that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest. The God of our Fathers hath preordained thee that thou shouldst know His will and

see the Just One and shouldst hear the voice from His mouth for *thou shalt be His witness.*" (chap. ix. 17, xxii. 14, 15.)

Point II.—His Training

No wonder that St. Paul was proud of this appearance of Jesus to him; it was true he was born out of due time, that he was last of all the Apostles, *least* of them all in one way because he had not the privilege of a formation by the Master Himself as the others had during their three years' training with Him, true that in his own estimation he was not worthy to be called an Apostle because he persecuted the Church of God; but on the other hand Our Lord's special favours to him more than made up and he will never let us forget them—never let us forget that he "laboured more abundantly" than all the others, and yet that no praise was due to himself: "Yet not I but the grace of God with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.) But where was he trained? How did he hear the Gospel of which he was so suddenly "made a minister" (Eph. iii. 7) and of which he was now to be a witness? How did he learn the spirit of Christ with which he was so deeply imbued that he could with very truth say: 'And I live, now not I but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) He answers these questions himself. "Neither did I receive it (the Gospel) from man, nor did I learn it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ"; (Gal. i. 12.) we do not know exactly when or how, but we do know that after his conversion he spent three years in Arabia. (Gal. i. 17.) No doubt this time was spent with Jesus Who was continually revealing Himself and the things He would have him teach to the new convert. No doubt He often re-appeared to him here as He had promised that He would when He first called him. "To this end have I appeared to thee that I may make thee a minister and a witness of those things which thou hast seen and of those things wherein *I will appear to thee.*" (Acts xxvi. 16.) He was taught, then, by Our Lord Himself

and had no need to confer with flesh and blood. (Gal. i. 16.) Even when he went to see Peter (verse 18) it was not, St. Chrysostom says, " to learn anything of him, but only to set eyes on him." It may have been during this long Retreat given by Our Lord Himself that St. Paul experienced some of his " visions and revelations of the Lord " of which he speaks in 2 Cor. xii 1–5. " I know a man in Christ (whether in the body I know not or out of the body I know not, God knoweth) such a one caught up to the third heaven; he was caught up into Paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter, of such a one I will glory." He fell into a trance on one occasion when he was praying in the temple and had a vision of his Master Who warned him to leave Jerusalem: " Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off will I send thee." (Acts xxii. 17–21.) Another time when he was in prison in Jerusalem the Lord appeared to him and " standing by him said: Be constant, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (chap. xxiii 11.) He was evidently well used to appearances and visions and trances. Well may he say: " Neither did I learn but by revelation of JESUS Christ."

Point III.—THE REASONS FOR OUR LORD'S APPEARING

Our Lord always, as we have seen, had some special reason for His appearances to His disciples, but in St. Paul's case these reasons are very definitely stated:

(1) *For his conversion*—to tell him that it was hard for him to " kick against the goad "—that is, to go on in spite of the prickings of his conscience. (chap. ix. 5.)

(2) *To reveal Himself* to him. (Gal i. 16.) " I am JESUS of Nazareth."

(3) *To call him to be an Apostle*—one *sent* by Our Lord Himself—" the nations unto which I send thee." (Acts

xxvi. 17.) "Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by JESUS Christ"—so he says himself in Gal i. 1.

(4) *To make him a minister* of the Gospel. "To this end have I appeared to thee that I may make thee a minister." (Acts. xxvi. 16. Eph. iii. 6. 7.) And he speaks to the Colossians of the "Church whereof I am made a minister." (chap. i. 25.)

(5) To make him a *witness*, which every Apostle had to be. "Thou shalt be His witness to all men of those things which thou hast seen and heard." (Acts xxii. 15.) As he said in his speech before Agrippa: "Being aided by the help of God I stand unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other thing than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come to pass; that Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead."

(6) To give him a special commission—that of *preaching to the Gentiles*. "This man is to Me a vessel of election to carry My Name before the Gentiles" (chap. ix. 15). His own testimony is: It pleased God "to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." (Gal. i. 16.)

(7) To *warn him of the cross*. "I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for My name's sake." (Acts. ix. 16.)

(8) For *his instruction*. This reason is more applicable to Our Lord's later appearances to St. Paul when he was in Arabia and after. He instructed him most carefully about the Holy Eucharist and other doctrines which it was important for an Apostle to receive first-hand. St. Paul prefaces the first account that was ever written of the Last Supper with the words: "*I have received of the Lord* that which also I delivered unto you." (1 Cor. xi. 23.) And, speaking generally of the Gospel which he preached, he says to the Galatians (ch. i. 12.) "Neither did I receive it from man nor did I learn it but by revelation of JESUS Christ," and to Timothy: "The gospel of the glory of the blessed God which hath been committed to my trust." (1 Tim. i. 11.)

"Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 16 and xi. 1) says the great St. Paul. It is not in his "visions and revelations"—in God's extraordinary dealings with him—that we are to follow him, but in his humility. The more God showered His special favours upon him the more he protested that he was not worthy, less than the least, that all the praise and glory must go to God, that he had nothing to glory in but his weakness. All St. Paul wanted was to "know Christ and the power of His Resurrection," (Phil. iii. 10) and it was because his desires were so intense that God fulfilled them so richly.

Colloquy with the great St. Paul and with JESUS Who appeared to him.

Resolution. To be faithful to any revelation—that is inspiration of grace—that may be given to me to-day.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Who are Thou Lord? I am JESUS of Nazareth."

Resurrexit Tertia Die secundum Scripturas

Thursday after third Sunday.

"*If Christ be not risen again your faith is vain.*" (1 Cor. xv. 14.)

1*st Prelude.* A picture of the Resurrection.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to see what the Resurrection means to me.

Point I.—RESURREXIT

The Resurrection is the most important doctrine of our faith, that is why the Apostles, chosen to spread the faith,

were all men who had been witnesses of it. When a new Apostle had to be chosen to take Judas' place, St. Peter said he must be chosen from the men "who have companied with us all the time that the Lord JESUS came in and went out among us," and he "*must be made a witness with us of His Resurrection.*" (Acts i. 21, 22.) The Resurrection was the one theme of these first Apostles, the culminating point of the whole gospel, the centre round which all the rest turned, the hook from which everything depended, the foundation and the top-stone of the building, the corner stone which bound all together and held everything in its place. For the same reasons the Feast of Easter is the greatest feast of the whole year—*solemnitas solemnitatum.* Without it everything would crumble to pieces, for "*If Christ be not risen your faith is vain.*" It is a truth which St. Paul, the last of the Apostles who witnessed the Resurrection, was never tired of re-iterating in one form or another through all his Epistles. We know these things; they have been familiar to us from babyhood but are we sure that we understand them? *Why* is our faith vain if Christ is not risen? Be "ready always," St. Peter says, "to satisfy everyone that asketh for a reason of that hope which is in you." (1 Peter iii. 15) Let us see first whether we can satisfy *ourselves.* What difference would it make to me, a humble member of Christ's Church, if He had not risen?

Point II.—"MANY PROOFS"

To His Apostles "He showed Himself alive after His Passion by many proofs." (Acts i. 3.) We have seen during our Meditations on the Appearances of JESUS during the forty days what these proofs were. It was the Resurrection that made the Apostles believe in Christ's Kingdom—in the Church. Had He not risen, the "*we had hoped*" of the two going to Emmaus would have been the sad wail of all the

disciples ! Why ? Because it would have proved that He was not the Messias. The Scriptures had said that the Messias would not be holden by death. (Ps. xv. 10) He rose again "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 4) St. Paul says. The great joy of the Apostles was caused by the fact that He had risen *as He said.* If a great miracle like that had taken place because He said it would, they could put their faith in all the rest—their faith was *not vain*, they had the proofs of it in their hands. But even if it had not been foretold, and even if JESUS had not said that the Son of Man would rise again on the third day, our faith would still have been vain without the Resurrection ; something else more important than the seal and the credentials would have been wanting —*a part*, and the most important part of the plan of our Redemption would have been wanting too ; it would have been easy to prove that the Incarnation itself was a failure ! How so ?

Point III.—THE RESURRECTION NECESSARY FOR THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

What is the plan of Redemption ? Quite simply and sufficiently for our present purpose it is this : God, in His love, wished to adopt the human race, He wanted them to be *really* His sons, so He planned for His own only-begotten Son, Who had His own divine nature, to take to Himself our human nature. The divine perfections were thus joined to our human nature, and the adopted sons were "made conformable to the image of His Son that He might be the first-born *amongst many brethren.*" (Rom. viii. 29.) He was the Head, they were the members, of the mystical Body ; the members were *really* the children of God because the divine perfections—that is His grace—which flowed from Him into His Firstborn Son, passed from the Head into the members

so that they were sons of God " and joint-heirs with Christ ; " (verse 17) ; but the adopted sons spoiled God's plan, they lost God's grace and with it the right to call Him Father. The remedy was at hand ; the firstborn Son, because He was God, was able to offer to His Father something that was adequate to make reparation for the outrage His brethren had committed. He offered His perfect human nature as a sacrifice to God for them. God being infiinite can only be adequately satisfied by an infinite satisfaction, which His Son's was, because it was joined to the divine. This is why God can only accept our offerings *through* Christ the Head ; of themselves they are finite and not worthy of the acceptance of a God, but passing through Christ they partake of His infinity ; a beggar cannot give worthily to a King but a *King* can ; we cannot give worthily to God but the God-Man can. One of God's laws is that a sacrifice entails shedding of blood and death ; this law His Firstborn Son was able to fulfil because He had taken a human Body, and He did fulfil it even to the shedding of every drop of His Blood. Then that perfect human Body was *dead* ; but It could not remain dead and " see corruption " because It was joined to the Divinity, It could not remain dead because It (with the divine Soul) was the Head of the mystical Body and the Head must be a *living* Head if the body is to be a living body. If It had remained dead, the whole point of the *Incarnation* (the taking of our *flesh*) would have been missed—it would only have been a temporary arrangement which is inconceivable when we are dealing with divine plans. If it had remained dead, *death* would have gained the victory and Satan's head would not have been crushed. If It had remained dead, He could not have continued to say to His members : This is My Body, this is My Blood, take ye and eat, to sustain the life of grace in your souls, for there would have been no Body and Blood to give. If It had remained dead we should have been, as St. Paul says, " of all men the most miserable," still in our sins ;

because, though the plan of giving life—the life of grace—to the members of the mystical Body was an admirable one, the means of carrying out the plan would have failed; there would have been no Head from whose fulness of grace the members were to receive grace; the plan of Redemption would have been incomplete, imperfect and therefore not divine, and therefore not a Redemption at all, we should be still in our sins, still looking for the Messias to come and save us from them.

The mystical Body is a mystery but it is not a myth, it cannot exist without a head. We are members of Christ in our bodies as well as in our souls, joined by the Incarnation to the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism and the Head lives and moves in all His members. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. vi. 15.) "We are members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones." (Eph. v. 30.)

"If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found *false witnesses* of God, because we have given testimony against God that He hath raised up Christ Whom He hath not raised up!" (1 Cor. xv. 14, 15) "But the sure foundation of God standeth firm." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

Point IV.—Our Resurrection Necessary to our Redemption

"There shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust," (Acts xxiv. 15) of those who die in the state of grace and of those who die out of that state. Holy Scripture is quite clear on the point. We are only going to consider the Resurrection of the Just, not of those who have rejected the work of Redemption.

This fourth point follows naturally on the last, for if the

resurrection of the Head was a necessity to the work of Redemption the resurrection of the members is a necessity also. The members are joined to the Head and where He is they must be; (St. John xvii. 24) they are to be like Him, to bear His image in their bodies as well as in their souls. (1 Cor. xv. 49.) JESUS will re-form the *body of our lowness* and make it like to the *body of His glory*, (Phil. iii. 21) so that we shall rise again in the likeness of His glorious Resurrection Body.

Would it be possible for the soul to exist for ever without the body? Possible or not there would be a certain incongruity about it, for God has made human nature to consist of a soul and a body, and the one without the other is incomplete. All God's works are perfect, a disembodied spirit is *not* perfect, it lacks its complement, the body; it longs for the redemption of its body, without which St. Paul seems to imply, it has not fully entered into the rights of an adopted son. (Rom. viii. 23.) The Elder Brother, the First-born Son has His Body, His brethren are groaning within themselves because they want their bodies.

Neither would the mystical Body be complete without the resurrection of the members. Because the Head has risen, the members must rise too. The members are the complement (the "fulness" Eph. i. 23) of the Head and make the mystical Body complete.

"I believe in the resurrection of the body." "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in *incorruption*; it is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in *glory*; it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in *power*; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a *spiritual body*." (1 Cor. xv. 42-44.) It is then to have the qualities of the glorious, risen Body of JESUS. If I would share in the Resurrection of the Just I must see to it that these qualities belong now to my *spiritual* life. Membership with a *living* Christ means a life of holiness, a life of grace, a life of immortality, impassibility, subtlety, agility and clarity of *soul*;

it means being " alive unto God in Christ JESUS Our Lord." (Rom. vi. 11.) " Present yourselves to God then, as those that are alive from the dead." (verse 13) And for the *body*, there cannot indeed be a greater inducement to keeping it pure and holy in preparation for the great destiny that awaits it, than the thought that whenever we use it we are using a *member of Christ*. " Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ." (1 Cor. vi. 15.)

Colloquy with St. Paul who has given us so much instruction on the Resurrection.

Resolution. To prepare both soul and body for the Resurrection of the Just.

Spiritual Bouquet. " Now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep." (1 Cor. xv. 20.)

The Risen Life (1)

IMMORTALITY

Friday after third Sunday.

" Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more. Death shall no more have dominion over Him." (Rom. vi. 9.)

" This mortal must put on immortality." (1 Cor. xv. 53.)

1*st Prelude.* A picture of JESUS risen.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to participate in this quality of the Risen Life.

In this Meditation and those which follow on the Risen Life we are going to see not only what are the qualities of the risen body, in which our bodies, re-formed and made like to the Body of His glory, will share ; but also how they can be applied to our spiritual life of which they must form a part if we are to share in the Resurrection of the Just.

Point I.—"DEATH SHALL NO MORE HAVE DOMINION OVER HIM"

"I am alive, and was dead; and behold I am living for ever and ever." (Apoc. i. 18.). Here we have the death, the resurrection and the immortality. It is impossible for death to touch that glorified Body, it is beyond the region of death. Death may come with all the violence it can command—no matter, the Body is impassible, it can suffer nothing. God, Whose justice called for vengeance, will not touch that immortality either, for the debt has been paid. "He dieth no more." "He died *once*," (Rom. vi. 9, 10) and that was enough; God's justice is satisfied and death has no more dominion.

If I am to participate in this first quality of the life of JESUS Risen, I must prepare for it now. How? By cherishing the new life which JESUS died to win for me—namely the life of grace in the soul. That life is not yet immortal. No one can touch it without my permission, but I can give the word for its execution—nay! I can slay it with my own hand; by one mortal sin I can stamp out the life of grace. But if I cherish it and guard it carefully till I am summoned to stand before my Master to give an account of those things done *in the body*, it will then become immortal and will live for ever and ever in my immortal soul, and will ensure my body participating in the Resurrection of the Just. "Death shall no more have dominion over" me, for sin will no longer be able to approach me.

What I have to aim at, then, is a spiritual immortality; as Christ's risen Body could die no more, I must see to it that my life of grace dies no more. I must be exceedingly careful not only about mortal sin, which would be fatal to it, but also about venial sin which can injure it and make it more susceptible to a mortal attack. "Let not *sin reign* in your mortal body." (Rom. vi. 12.) It must not get the upper hand, it must not be the master. If I once allow a habit of sin, even

of a venial sin or of a gross imperfection, I am allowing my enemy to have a friend at court, and my spiritual immortality is in danger.

Point II.—"The Grace of God is Life Everlasting" (Rom. vi. 23.)

How am I to ensure this everlasting life? I cannot acquire it, it is a free gift of God, but it rests with me whether or not I keep it. How can I keep the grace of God in my soul? There is only one way—by death, the death of self, the crucifixion of the old man, who is the enemy of the new life and will kill it if he can. When I can truly say: "With Christ I (that is the old man) am nailed to the cross" then I can truly say also: "And I (*i.e.* the new man, the man whose life is sustained by grace) *live*." (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) Life and death at the same time—the life dependent on the death. An anomaly, but one we are well used to. "Unless a grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (St. John xii. 24, 25.) If it die there will be a new life. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die first." (1 Cor. xv. 36.)

If I want, then, to partake of the life that will never die, if I want to make the immortality of my soul and body, which is the inheritance of my human nature, a blessing and not a curse, I shall look upon God's grace as my most cherished possession; I shall understand why I have been taught that to lose it is the greatest evil that can possibly happen to me; and, that it may have every chance to live and grow and flourish, I shall be ruthless in cutting away everything that can hinder or harm it. How can I get strength for this and how can I get the knowledge to discern between what

is harmful and what is beneficial to this new life? There is only one sure way and that is by contemplating Christ, from Whom the life comes. He is the Head, and the life is in Him for us, it is ever flowing from the Head into the members, "of His fulness we all have received." (St. John i. 16.) What more natural than that we should keep our eyes fixed on the source from whence this new life flows? And the more deeply we enter into the divine plan for our Redemption, the more clearly we shall see that this new life is Christ Himself, that it is He Himself Who is being poured into us and making us "other Christs," so that the life which we live *should be* the life of Christ. We should be able to say with St. Paul: "Not I but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) It is not *His* fault if this is not true. There is nothing wrong with the source, nothing wrong with the spiritual life that is poured in. Where then is the fault? Why is not the Christ-life so strong within me that all can see it, that all can see my likeness to Him? Because the "*Ego*" is still so strong, because the war against the old man is not sufficiently vigorous, because I am letting him live instead of putting him to death, giving in to his tastes and desires, allowing him a place in my heart to which he has no right and which is pledged to Another. No wonder that the likeness to my Master is a poor one, hardly noticeable; it is blurred over by the "*Ego*."

Let me look round once again and see in what particulars I am giving in still to the wishes of the old man and let me be drastic in my treatment. The result will immediately be "more grace," more of the Christ life, a greater likeness to Him, a closer union with Him because something has been done by His grace which will live for ever and will help me to attain to the immortality of the soul.

Point III.—The Sustenance of the New Life

As we know well, the instruments the Head uses for conveying His grace to the members are the Sacraments, and it is

chiefly by the Holy Eucharist that the new life is nourished and sustained in the soul. It is the "Bread of life." "If any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever." "The Bread of God . . . giveth life. He that eateth My Flesh hath everlasting life and I will raise him up in the last day." (St. John vi. 33, 52, 55.) It is the guarantee of immortality. "May the Body of Christ guard your soul unto life eternal" are the words spoken each time that the Blessed Sacrament is given. The object of the Holy Eucharist is to maintain the divine life in us. That is why Our Lord chose to give It to us under the form of food. As food sustains our natural life, so the Bread that He gives sustains our spiritual life, and that Bread is *Himself*. He puts Himself into us, allows us to eat Himself so that the life that He has received from His Father and gives to us may be increased and sustained. So it is by union with Christ that the life is sustained and that we become like Him, for the action of this Spiritual Food is not the same as that of natural food. The natural food we take is absorbed by the body and transformed into it; this Spiritual Food transforms those who receive It into Itself, so that by means of the Holy Eucharist we are transformed into Christ. We live by Him, that is by His life. "He that eateth Me the same shall live by Me."

Little by little, then, if we are putting no obstacles in the way by attachment to venial sin, or by wilful negligence or carelessness or wilful imperfections of any kind, we are, by means of our Communions, whether we feel it or not, being transformed into Christ. His life and our lives are being more closely welded together. We cannot help becoming like Him for the same life animates us. We are "other Christs." And when we receive Christ we receive His *immortality*. The immortality of the Head passes into the members and it could not be otherwise than true that "He that eateth this Bread shall *live for ever*."

Oh! Let me see to it that this quality of the resurrection

body makes me realize more than ever the grandeur and the importance of my Communions. Let me see with the eye of faith that grand immortal life entering into my soul and transforming me into Christ Himself, never forgetting that though the Communion is only transitory, the *union* is permanent and will, if I will let it, be not a *visit* merely but an *abiding* of Christ in me, preserving my soul unto *life eternal.*

Colloquy with Him Who says : " I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly." (St. John x. 10.)

Resolution. To think much to-day of the divine immortal life which is mine.

Spiritual Bouquet. " To-day I must *abide* in thy house."

The Risen Life (2)

IMPASSIBILITY

Saturday after third Sunday.

" *It behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again.*" (St. Luke xxiv. 46.)

1*st Prelude.* Picture of JESUS risen.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to participate spiritually in this quality of the Risen Life.

Point I.—THE IMPASSIBILITY OF THE RISEN BODY

When the Angels and the Holy Souls who accompanied the Soul of JESUS from Limbo before His Resurrection saw the Body of JESUS lying in the Sepulchre, they saw all the

marks of suffering upon it, they saw what sin and death had done, they saw what the offering of His Body to His Father in sacrifice had meant, they saw the effects of sin, and their one thought must have been : How terribly He suffered ! And when a moment later they saw that same Body alive, the Blood coursing through Its veins, and a dazzling light coming from every part of It, they must have understood what impassibility means. Their one thought then must have been : He can suffer no more ! That glorious Resurrection Body is *impassible.*

Impassibility goes further than immortality. It is not only death that is in question, but anything that leads to it, sickness, suffering, weakness, accident. The resurrection body will be immune from all these. It will not be subject to the laws of our senses. We can understand this better by considering the Body of JESUS in the Holy Eucharist. It is His glorified Body which we receive in Holy Communion, but we neither taste nor smell nor see It.

We sometimes allow ourselves to get into the way of thinking of JESUS as suffering in the Tabernacle, from loneliness, neglect, slight, outrage ; but we must be careful to know just what we mean by such considerations. No idea of suffering must be connected with JESUS in the Tabernacle. It is His glorified Body which is there and It is *impassible.* From His revelations to the saints we know He allows and wishes us to think of His Sacred Heart as suffering from the coldness and indifference and sins of men and He asks those who love Him to make reparation and to console Him for all this ; but this is quite compatible with the impassibility of His Resurrection Body. The sympathy He wants from us takes us back to Gethsemani, where His intensest sufferings took place, and which He wants to be ever present to His children as it is ever present to Himself. He could have made His Human Nature impassible from the first moment of His Incarnation, but He wanted to show us the value and efficacy of suffering. Even in His

impassible Resurrection Body He has kept the scars of His wounds, so that in a sense through all eternity we shall have His sufferings before us, and the thought of this and the eternal contemplation of the wounds will be to us an endless source of joy.

Point II.—Spiritual Impassibility

The impassibility of Christ's Resurrection Body, then, teaches us amongst other things how precious is suffering in God's sight, for it is impossible to contemplate impassibility without thinking also of its contrary—*passibility*; and if suffering is precious in God's sight it must also be precious in mine. One day my body too will, I hope, be impassible; this thought should make me not only patient in bearing my suffering now, but eager for all the opportunities of suffering which the whole of eternity will never afford. Why is it precious? Because, though there were endless other ways He might have chosen, suffering was the way the Master chose to arrive at His glory. "Ought not Christ to suffer and so to enter into His glory?" He is the Head, we are the members. If the Head suffers, the members must suffer with It. What the Head is and does the members must be and do; or the life is a different one, in other words the mystical Body is a myth. The value of my suffering, then, is that it makes me like Christ, and all suffering that I receive patiently and humbly in this spirit, uniting it to the sufferings of the Head, *does* make me like Him and increases the union between us. So much for the impassibility which must be mine if my body is one day to share the glorious impassibility of the Resurrection Body of Christ.

But how can impassibility be a quality of my spirutal life now? It is important to be quite clear about this, because if it is not, I have no right to hope for the Resurrection of the Just. The spiritual quality of impassibility is one which pre-

vents the passing things of time and sense from having power to touch my spiritual life. It makes me, though in the world, not of it. It makes me, though I am keenly alive to all the things that wound and hurt, act as though I felt them not. It is a matter then of the *will* and is a quality which we know well under the name of *Holy Indifference*. It is a union so close with my divine Head that nothing has power to make me suffer. It is the overwhelming power of a great love. Even earthly love has this power, little petty worries and troubles fly before it, things that people say, which used to hurt so much, are hardly noticed—nothing matters. Between earthly lovers this state of things naturally cannot last long, but while it does, it is a beautiful picture of the love between Christ and His Church, of the love of the Head for the members. He counted suffering as nothing for the love that He bore. "Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it"; (Eph. v. 25) and this is the kind of love that He expects from His members, an absorbing love, a love that makes them *impassible*, that makes nothing matter. "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." (Cant. ii. 16.) Only one thing has the power to harm that spiritual life and that is *sin*, because it interrupts the union, interferes with the love, makes a jar in the relationship.

How is it with me? To what extent does this quality of impassibility enter into my spiritual life? Do I realize that if I had a closer union with my divine Head, a truer love for my divine Lover, it would be impossible to care as much as I do about what people say and think of me, impossible to make so much of the trifling little inconveniences and troubles of my life? All the time that I am turning over and over in my mind something that has hurt me and stung me to the quick, my interests are centring round self! This is not true love. True love forgets itself and all that hurts it. It would go to its Lover and say: They have said this about us. It is my fault and I am sorry I have provoked them, but it cannot

interfere with our love, can it ? *Nothing* can make any difference to that. Then it is at once forgotten—absorbed into the great loving Heart of the divine Lover. This is impassibility. . . . . But I am so sensitive. I feel things much more than other people, it seems impossible for me to be impassible. . . . . Impossible to be so perfectly, but not impossible to aim at it and strive after it. The more sensitive we are, the more merit there is in overcoming it, the more, too, do we resemble Christ, for none can be more sensitive than He Who loved us with such an absorbing love that nothing mattered. He gave up all—emptied Himself (Phil. ii. 7) that He might make us members of His Body, that He might count us as His brethren, that He might present us to His Father as true sons—fellow-heirs with Himself to that glorious impassibility which can only be reached by the very real suffering which our attempts after spiritual impassibility cost us. It is the cross which He Himself has given us and our staggering efforts under its burden are all noticed and appreciated by Him. Each time—and perhaps there will be many in a day—that we fall under it, we have only to look up to Him and say : Lord, all the same "Thou *knowest* that I love Thee," and our divine Lover will be content.

Point III.—The Joy of Impassibility

If my life then is hidden with Christ,—bound up with His Resurrection life, so that I too in my measure am living the Resurrection life, seeking the things which are above and not the things that are on the earth, (Col. iii. 1, 2) dead to self and alive to God, I am already sharing the joy of the Resurrection life. It is a joy which no one shall take from me, (St. John xvi. 22) because no one can get at it or touch it. It is a joy that comes out of impassibility, it is the effect of it. Impassibility protects the risen life of the soul from all

that would trouble it; the result is *joy*—a joy which cannot but come from the knowledge that self in all its thousand forms is being trampled on; not the joy of victory but the joy of battle, the joy of knowing that we are fighting on the winning side. "With Christ I am nailed to the cross *and* I live." (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) There is the "passibility" and the "impassibility," and between the two, the outcome of both, lies the *joy*.

Colloquy with JESUS Risen and impassible. Grant me so to suffer that I may reign, so to suffer in the "old man" that the "new man" may be impassible.

Resolution. To strive after the quality of impassibility.

Spiritual Bouquet. "Having joy set before Him He endured the cross despising the shame." (Heb. xii. 2.)

The Risen Life (3)

INCORRUPTIBILITY

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

" The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise again incorruptible ; and we shall be changed ; for this corruptible must put on incorruption. (1 Cor. xv. 52, 53.)

" It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption." (verse 42.)

1*st Prelude.* A picture of the Risen Body of JESUS.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to have the spiritual quality of incorruptibility.

Point I.—THE INCORRUPTIBILITY OF THE RISEN BODY

" It is sown in corruption." " Behold I was conceived in iniquities and in sins did my mother conceive me." (Ps. l. 7 and Job xiv. 4.) Corruption is a consequence of original sin and is the lot of all who are infected by it ; it means simply the corruptible body, St. Paul calls it the *flesh*. JESUS took our flesh, but He did not take corruptible flesh ; *His* Body was not sown in corruption, neither was it possible for that Body to see corruption after death, for sin had never touched it. " He Whom God hath raised from the dead saw no corruption." (Acts xiii. 37.) This immunity from corruption the bodies of the Just will share after the Resurrection. " The dead shall rise not only incorrupt but incorruptible. The curruptible must put on incorruption, for flesh and blood, that is corruptible flesh and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. xv. 50.) Only those who live the risen life now spiritually, can hope to partake in this quality of the risen body. What was the life we lived before we lived this new life ? What was the old life like ? How can we describe it ? St. Paul describes it for us. He calls it " the servitude

of corruption," (Rom. viii. 21.) This is our state by nature, or when we deliberately stamp out grace, it is a serving of the flesh—of the " old man," and it is nothing but slavery. St. Peter tells us that those who live this life are the " slaves of corruption," (2 Peter ii. 19) they serve themselves, their own flesh, their own desires and tastes and likes and dislikes and think of nothing higher. They are not obliged to be thus in slavery. It rests with them, if they will by God's aid, to lead the new life—the life of grace, and to enjoy " the liberty of the glory of the children of God " ; but to do this they must be prepared for a change—" this corruption must put on incorruption " ; corruption is not compatible with the new life. It is only by " flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world that they can be made partakers of the divine nature," (2 Peter i. 4) that is, that they can live the risen life. There must be a horror of corruption, a dread of the slightest approach to the old servitude shown by " carefully avoiding the occasions of sin." If I never go near corruption I can never be corrupted ; and this is what the risen life is to be—*incorruptible*, because I am determined that all the old corrupting leaven shall be " purged out " and that the feast of the new resurrection life shall be kept with " the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. v. 6–8.) " We are born again (there is the new life) not of corruptible seed (like the old life was) but *incorruptible*." (1 Peter i. 23.)

Point II.—My Faith must be Incorruptible

If I am to live now this resurrection life, that is if I am to have the qualities of the resurrection body in my spiritual life, if I am to live a life of holiness, my *faith* must be incorruptible. What is my spiritual life ? We have seen that it is the life of Christ Himself which He received from His Father and passed on to me to make me also a child of that Father ; in

other words it is *grace*. Now this, as far as I am concerned, all turns on the incorruptibility of my faith. If I allow my faith in the Divinity of Christ, in His Incarnation, in His Resurrection to be corrupted by those who are in these days so ready to corrupt it, the life of grace, the life of holiness, cannot be mine. How so? Because if I do not believe these doctrines to be the truths that they are, my faith is vain, my spiritual life is a myth, my strivings after holiness are futile. I am attempting to build a house on sand.

(1) Take first faith in the *Divinity*. If I do not believe that Christ is divine, that is, that He is the only begotten Son of God, of the same nature as the Father, "God of God, Light of light, very God of very God," I can have no spiritual life; because the Christ Who died to win me the right to it, not being divine, could not offer an *infinite* sacrifice to His Father for sin; His Sacrifice therefore would be inadequate and the debt would remain unpaid, there would be no pardon for the sinner, no grace, no spiritual life. I make all these things impossible for me by allowing my faith in the Divinity to be corrupted and the only channel through which grace can flow to be blocked.

(2) Faith in the *Incarnation*. If I allow my faith in this great truth to be corrupted how will that effect my spiritual life? The whole of the spiritual life turns on the Incarnation. It was because God took our nature and became Man that He can make us partakers of His divine nature—by the life of grace which makes us sons. By the Incarnation, God the Son made Himself also our *Elder Brother*; and to His First-born Son God gave the life—His own life, which He was to pass on to His brethren that they might be His adopted children sharing His life. If it were not *God* Who then took our human nature, there was no *divine* life passed on, no supernatural life, no grace. So it is impossible to live a life of holiness if we allow our faith in the Incarnation to be corrupted.

(3) Faith in the *Resurrection*. We have already seen that if there were no Resurrection our faith would have been vain; but how can a want of belief in the Resurrection effect the spiritual life? Why is it so essential to keep faith in this great doctrine incorruptible? Again we must say that without the Resurrection of the Head, the life of the mystical Body could not have been sustained—there would have been no Blessed Sacrament to sustain it, it would have languished for want of food. "He that eateth Me, he shall live by Me." "To as many as *received* Him," first by faith which gave them life, then by the Blessed Sacrament which sustained that life, He gave them power to be made the *sons of God*." (St. John i. 12.)

How do we become children of God? By faith. "You are all the children of God, by faith in Christ JESUS." (Gal. iii. 26.) If we allow our faith to be corrupted we cease to be His children, we spoil His plan of Redemption, we cut ourselves off from the spiritual life, grace departs and a life of holiness is impossible to us. A life of holiness means that we are trying to live up to our high calling of sons of God, and for this, faith is an absolute necessity. No wonder St. Peter speaks of the trial of our faith as being something that is beyond all price—"more precious than gold which is tried by the fire" to free it from all corruption. (1 Peter i. 7.)

Point III.—THE INCORRUPTIBILITY WHICH GOD VALUES

There is another incorruptibility which we shall do well to strive after, if we would lead the spiritual life which God loves to see His adopted children developing, and so increasing the likeness between themselves and their Elder Brother. It is St. Peter who counsels us—and especially women—to adorn our hearts with it: "The incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit which is rich in the sight of God." (1 Peter iii. 4.) This incorruptibility is *rich*, that is costly,

precious, something He esteems highly. Why does He value it so much ?

(1) Because those who strive after it are doing their best to copy their Elder Brother Who said : " Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of Heart," and all the efforts of His adopted children to be like His dearly beloved Son cannot but be precious in His sight.

(2) Because " a quiet and a meek spirit " can only be attained by sacrifice, can only be attained by a deliberate crushing of self, thwarting the old man, stamping out the old life and cherishing the new life—the Christ life, and all sacrifice is " rich in the sight of God."

There is an incorruptibility then, which it is in my power to cultivate and offer to God and upon which I know He will set a high price. What a point this gives to my efforts to develop the qualities of the risen life, for this incorruptibility is nothing more nor less than *humility*, and we know the value God sets upon it. " A quiet and a meek spirit " makes us accept all that comes with meekness, being fully persuaded that we are just nothing, worth nothing, asking like little children for what we need, but quite ready to be refused and to think it the most natural thing in the world that we should be. In quietness and confidence possess ye your souls, there is no need for noise and show, it is " the hidden man of the heart " that God values, the life hidden with Christ in God, never asserting its rights, nor proclaiming its innocence nor its virtues, a spirit that can afford to be *quiet* because it is confident that it is a child of God, sharing His very life, and that not a hair of its head will perish. These are the qualities which are " rich in the sight of God," " Who hath regenerated us into a lively hope, by the Resurrection of JESUS Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance *incorruptible* . . . . reserved in heaven for you who by the power of God are kept by *faith*." (1 Peter i. 3–5.)

Colloquy with Him Who has made us, by His Resurrection, "partakers of the divine nature."

Resolution. As to faith, meekness, quietness.

Spiritual Bouquet. "We shall be changed."

The Risen Life (4)

SUBTLETY

Monday after fourth Sunday.

"It is sown a natural (that is, an animal) body; it shall rise a spiritual (that is, a subtle) body." (1 Cor. xv. 44.)

1*st Prelude.* A picture of Christ's Risen Body.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to participate *spiritually* in the quality of subtlety.

Point I.—Subtlety

It is sown an animal body, *i.e.* a natural body, a body according to nature, a body animated by the soul which gives it life and growth, which is its form and which expresses itself through the matter of the body. Such is man when he is sown or planted in this world—a perfect specimen of human nature consisting of a soul and a body. At the Resurrection of the Just the body will not be merely a natural body animated by a soul, but "a *spiritual* body," dominated by the spirit—the soul within it; the spiritual life (the life of grace) will have been so developed in the soul, that it will express itself in the body, making it no longer animal or natural only, but spiritual. It is this spirituality of the body which is called *subtlety.* The body will be no hindrance to the soul;

on the contrary it will be a help, for by its means the soul will be able to express all the grace of its divine life. This does not mean that the body will be spiritual in the sense of not being corporal. When the Apostles thought Our Lord was a spirit because of this quality of subtlety He said to them: "Handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have." (St. Luke xxiv. 39.) The resurrection body will be a true body, with all its senses as before, but with every sense subtle, perfect, complete. The soul will dominate it so completely and it will lend itself so completely to the soul that it will be sufficiently subtle for the intellect and thought and imagination of the soul to be able to express themselves through it. In the natural or animal body this is not so; the soul's wishes may go here and there and everywhere, but the body remains irresponsive; the soul has many thoughts which it cannot express, and it often wants, if it could do so, to leave the body far behind; but so subtle will be the sight and hearing and other senses of the resurrection body that it will be able to respond to all the beautiful things that the soul conceives. It was by virtue of this quality in Our Lord's Resurrection Body that He was able to appear to His disciples when He would during the forty days and to hide Himself from them when He would. "Their eyes were opened and they knew Him and He vanished out of their sight." (St. Luke xxiv. 31.) He made Himself visible or invisible as it pleased Him.

"It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual (or subtle) body." What is it which will work this change? Many things conspire to work it, and one of them is the use that is made of the *spiritual* quality of subtlety during the probation on earth. It is here that it is sown a natural body; but God gives the soul a chance of a supernatural life, and if it chooses by His aid to develop that life it will find itself gradually changed from natural to spiritual. We will consider this quality of the spiritual life in our next point.

Point II.—Subtlety in the Spiritual Life

(1) Subtlety in the resurrection body is the quality which prevents it from being in any way a hindrance to the soul. In the spiritual life—the life of grace, it is this quality of subtlety which removes all difficulties and obstacles which threaten to hinder the progress of that life. If we possess it, we shall consider nothing too hard to suffer, nothing too much trouble to do, nothing too precious to give up, for that life. "I can do *all things* through Christ Who strengthens me" is the cry of the *subtle* soul. Nothing is an obstacle. "What wilt Thou have me to do?" Thou hast only to tell me and I will do it. "Tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." The soul is ready to do anything—even things that seem quite impossible—for its Beloved. Such is subtlety, it is the gift of fortitude, courage of the highest kind. They endured "as seeing Him Who is invisible," (Heb. xi. 27), their sight was so subtle that they could see Him Who was invisible to others and endure anything for His sake.

(2) Subtlety will render the senses of the resurrection body more complete, more perfect, more delicate. Subtlety will give a delicacy of feeling with regard to the wishes of the Father Who has given that life, a keen relish for the heavenly Food which has been provided to sustain it, a taste for all the good things that the Elder Brother offers, an ear which is ever quick to hear the still small voice directing—that Voice which only ears rendered subtle by grace can hear, for it speaks to the heart; subtlety too will make the eye of the soul quick to discern the things of God and not only to taste but to see that He is sweet. (Ps. xxxiii. 9.) It is subtlety which makes the conscience delicate and tender and gives a clear, shrewd perception of what is right and just and honourable. "How can I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.)

(3) Subtlety will enable the resurrection body to appear when and where it will and to hide itself at will. It does the same now for the soul in the spiritual life. (*a*) It enables it to *appear* when it will and to be where it longs to be. "Seek the things that are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." The more this quality of subtlety is developed in the soul the more it will be able to practise detachment—to "mind the things that are above; not the things that are upon the earth." "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (St. Luke xii. 34.) The *longing* to be with Christ makes the subtle soul be with Him; the *desire* for His presence, makes it live in that presence; where it wishes to be there it is. (*b*) Subtlety also enables the soul to *hide* itself at will, to live the life hidden with Christ in God, to be in this world but not of it, to keep its motives and intentions pure for Him Who seeth in secret and to be content to remain a mystery to those who cannot see the things that it sees. Like the Archangel Raphael the subtle soul can truly say: "I use an invisible meat and drink which cannot be seen by men." (Tob. xii. 19.)

(4) Subtlety will make the soul dominate the body in the resurrection life; and it is subtlety which makes the spiritual life dominate now. Impossible and unequal though the fight often seems between the old life and the new, this quality, if it is developed, will see things through; it is like a wand transforming all it touches and making everything spiritual; it is always putting to the fore the importance of spiritual things, always making room for them, always making them possible; and if it is yielded to, it will conquer in the end and be one of the chief causes of the cry of triumph: "Thanks be to God Who hath given us the victory." (1 Cor. xv. 57.)

Let me examine myself on these four marks of subtlety, and I shall know where I stand and what my chances are of finding myself one day possessed of the quality of subtlety in my resurrection body.

(1) What is my attitude towards difficulties, temptations, crosses ?

(2) Are my spiritual senses delicate and refined ? Have I a tender conscience ?

(3) " If you be risen with Christ seek the things that are above, mind not the things that are upon the earth, *for* you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 1–3.) Do I understand this spiritual subtlety ?

(4) Can I truly say in spite of all, that I am leading the risen life—that the new life *dominates* the old ?

Colloquy with JESUS Risen.

Resolution. To allow nothing to be an obstacle to my spiritual life.

Spiritual Bouquet. " I can do all things."

The Risen Life (5)

AGILITY

Tuesday after fourth Sunday.

"*It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power,*" that is, St. Thomas says, *mobile and living.*

"*Even as by the gift of subtlety the body is wholly subject to the soul as its form, whence it derives its specific being, so by the gift of agility it is subject to the soul as its mover, so that it is prompt and apt to obey the spirit in all the movements and actions of the soul.*" (Summa. Q. lxxxiv. A. 1.)

1*st Prelude.* A picture of JESUS Risen.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to be spiritually agile.

Point I.—AGILITY

Agility is a quality which will make the risen body even more subject to the soul than subtlety makes it. Agility is a consequence of subtlety; because the risen body is subtle it must be agile too. Subtlety makes the body subject, agility enables it to carry out that subjection and put it into action. Subtlety prevents the body from resisting the soul or being in any way a hindrance to its expression of itself, agility fits it to carry out all the wishes of the soul and to obey its movements.

It was agility in the Risen Body of JESUS which enabled Him to transport Himself during the forty days to the places where He wished to be and brought Him to the side of the persons to whom He wished to appear.

This wonderful quality will be mine too one day if I attain to the Resurrection of the Just. I shall be able when I will

to visit and revel in the beauties of God's wonderful creation. If they appear beautiful and speak to me of God now, what will it be then, when I shall have seen the King in His beauty, and He will have made all my senses so subtle ! If I want to converse with anyone, in the twinkling of an eye I can be with them ; St. Augustine tells us that we shall be able to go where we will as quickly and as lightly as do pure spirits.

Verily it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him, but they *must* love Him, they must partake of the divine life now, they must have the quality of agility in their spiritual life, or they will never attain to the things that He has prepared ; so it will be more practical for me to concentrate my attention on my part—the preparation. It is *now* that I have to live the divine life, to reproduce in myself the risen life of Christ ; and it is only very slowly and gradually that the divine life will be developed ; I know how slow and gradual is the death of the old man, so slow, alas, as to be almost imperceptible ! It is the same with the new life ; so I need not be discouraged in making my meditation on this quality of agility as applied to my new life, it is a quality that I am aiming at and tending towards rather than one to which I have attained. If I do tend towards it, when Christ Who *is* our life shall appear I shall appear with Him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.)

Point II.—Agility in the Spiritual Life

St. Thomas tells us that it is agility which makes the body subject to the soul as its *mover*, making it prompt and apt to obey ; and Holy Scripture tells us that " Wisdom is more active than all active things (*mobilibus mobilior*) and reacheth everywhere by reason of her purity." (Wisd. vii. 24.) Those

who have the new life have this wisdom, for it is a gift of the Holy Ghost infused into them at their Baptism, so that in germ at any rate I may be quite sure that I have this quality of agility; what I have to see is whether I am developing it or allowing it to lie dormant.

Agility is a supernatural quality in the soul which makes it ready and eager to do God's Will at every moment. It is the will ever turned in the direction of God, moulded to His Will, making the soul quick to flee from temptation, prompt to obey, eager to run in the path of holiness, knowing nothing of fatigue, lassitude, lukewarmness, discouragement; zealous always for His cause; glad to be the one singled out to be "put upon," proud to be the one to "have the most to do," the one who is always asked to render a service or lend a helping hand; not because it happens to have a generous nature or an active body, but because such things crush self and develop the new life and please the Master, and it looks upon them as special marks of His favour and confidence. Such is the soul which has developed spiritual agility—"more active than all active things."

How can I develop this quality of agility in my soul? As I develop all the other qualities of the risen life—by crushing out the old life whose tendencies are all opposed to it, and by tending and nourishing and exercising the new life. But how can I ever manage to keep up this ceaseless activity of soul, this untiring energy in God's service when there is so much to drag me back and to weary and discourage me? "Hast thou not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, Who hath created the ends of the earth. *He* shall not faint—it is He that giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not. Youths shall faint and labour, and young men shall fall by infirmity; but they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Isaias xl. 28–31.)

Ah! Now I see how entirely supernatural is this agility; those who have little physical strength, yea, those who are chained to a bed of sickness are often those who have the most spiritual agility. While youths are fainting under the stress of their labour and young men are falling because their burdens are too heavy for them, there are those who are running without ever being weary, who are always keeping on without fainting. Who are these happy ones? Those who hope in the Lord; those who realize that they are nothing in themselves, that they have no strength of their own; that they are little and poor and helpless without Him. "He increaseth force and might to *them that are not*"—to those who are determined that self shall not *exist*. In return for every blow given to the old man He increaseth force and might, and thus they that hope in the Lord "renew their strength," thus the spiritual life grows. And when through weakness and frailty of the flesh they grow weary of the fight and tired of the suffering, they remember that He Whose agility of soul was so perfect that He did *always* the things that pleased His Father, allowed Himself "to be weary" too, that His brethren might know that He understood their difficulties, and also that He might be ever able to give strength to the weary. "*He* shall not faint." However tired I may be with the ceaseless efforts that the salvation of my soul demands, He is never tired and He is more anxious about it than I am.

If then I would have agility I must have humility; if I would fly as the eagle, I must be "a worm and no man" in my own estimation; if I would "run and not be weary" I must keep my body under and bring it into subjection; if I would "walk and not faint" I must ever hear the words in my ears: "Walk before Me and be thou perfect." It is the old paradox—the death and the life, the heights depending on the depths, the crown depending on the cross, the resurrection depending on the burial. Would I be agile? Let me

be humble. Would I " be risen with Christ " ? Let me be buried with Him. Would I wear the crown that He has " laid up for me " ? Let me carry daily the cross that He gives me. Would I one day rise with Christ ? Let me be content now to be buried with Him.

" Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. My Beloved is like a roe or a young hart." (Cant. ii. 8, 9.) Such is His agility ; and the qualities which He has, He gives to His brethren for they are to be like Him, and so He says : " Arise, *make haste*, my love, my dove, my beautiful one and come." (verse 10) Nothing can prevent the soul in grace from going to her Beloved when she will ; she can " reach everywhere by reason of her purity."

Colloquy with JESUS Risen, asking Him to make me understand that my agility depends on my humility.

Resolution. To remember when I am tired to-day, (1) the tireless activity of Heaven, (2) that " He giveth strength to the weary."

Spiritual Bouquet. " Fear not thou worm of Jacob, you that are *dead* of Israel, I have helped thee." (Isaias xli. 14.)

The Risen Life (6)

CLARITY

Wednesday after fourth Sunday.

" The city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it ; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the light thereof ; and the nations shall walk in the light of it ; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it." (Apoc. xxi. 23, 24.)

" Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (St. Matt. xiii. 43.)

1*st Prelude.* A picture of JESUS Risen.

2*nd Prelude.* So to multiply my grace now that I may bring much glory into Heaven.

Point I.—CLARITY IN THE RESURRECTION BODY

We need nothing beyond this description that St. John gives of Heaven to make us understand what clarity is ; the brightness or clarity is such that there is no need of the sun nor moon ! And what is this clarity ? The *glory of God.* What is called grace on earth becomes glory in Heaven. God is the author of all grace on earth, and He is the source of all glory in Heaven. It all emanates from Him ; and as He gave all grace to His Incarnate Son that He might be the First-born among many brethren, so when He returned victorious to sit at the Right Hand of His Father in Heaven, He gave Him all glory. This glory was in His Human Soul, but as the soul expresses itself through the body, the glory of His Soul overflowed into His Body ; it is this quality of the Resurrection Body which is called clarity. When we consider that the human Soul of JESUS contained, so far as anything created

can contain, all the infinite perfections of the Godhead, we can form some idea of what His glory is and of the clarity, in consequence, of His Resurrection Body ; we can understand something of what St. John meant when he said : " The Lamb is the light thereof, there is no need of the sun."

But was not all this glory of soul His before His Resurrection, why then did it not overflow then into His Body which could not have offered any resistance ? Why was not this quality of clarity always visible ? Because by His divine power He hid it. The *Lumen Christi* would have been too much for mortal eye. Once—on the Mount of Transfiguration—He allowed His glory to overflow into His Body and His clarity was seen by the three chosen Apostles and " they were struck with fear " for His garments even " became shining and exceeding white as snow " and " glittering " ; " His face did shine as the sun," and "*they saw His glory.*" But it was not for long, the vision was too much for them, and in His mercy Jesus hid it from them. After His Resurrection, as we saw in our earlier Meditations on the appearances, He could either hide this quality of clarity or let it be seen.

The glory of the Lamb is not the only glory of Heaven, for " there is one glory of the sun another of the moon and another of the stars." And if the glory of Our Lord does away with the need of the sun, what glory is it which takes away the need of the moon ?

The Eternal Father poured not only all the riches of His *grace* upon His Incarnate Son that He might distribute it amongst His Brethren, but the riches of His *glory* too. " Father glorify Thy Son (*clarifica Me Tu Pater*) that Thy Son may glorify Thee, (St. John xvii. 1) and it is by bringing " many children into glory," (Heb. ii. 10) that the Son glorifies the Father. " The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them ; " (St. John xvii. 22) and first of all He gave it to His Blessed Mother, to whom He gave such an abundance of grace. If she was " full of grace " on earth, in Heaven

she is full of glory. She is represented there as having " the moon under her feet." (Apoc. xii. 1.) She has taken its place, she is herself the moon, shining it is true, with a borrowed light, always it is true, one of the " lesser lights," but yet so charged with the *Lumen Christi* that it overflows into her most beautiful body, and makes her " fair as the moon, *bright* as the sun." (Cant. vi. 9.)

" And the kings of the earth shall bring their glory " into Heaven too. Who are these kings ? All those who have triumphed over sin in their battles with the world, the flesh and the devil, those who " have overcome by the Blood of the Lamb." " To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with Me in My *throne*, as I also have overcome and am set down with My Father in His throne." (Apoc. iii. 21.) At the resurrection, " the Just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father " ; according to their measure of grace will be their measure of glory, and in proportion to the glory of their souls will be the clarity of their bodies. " Star differeth from star in glory." (1 Cor. xv. 41.) Once again I am brought back to the fact that all depends on the use I make of grace now. The glory depends on the grace. " The just shall shine and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds." (Wisdom iii. 7.) Would I be amongst them ? Then I must make sure that spiritual clarity is mine now.

Point II.—Spiritual Clarity

I possess this spiritual clarity in germ as I do all the other qualities, but the question is how am I developing it ? It is a grace given ; am I increasing the grace ? " Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness." (St. Luke xi. 35.) If I am risen with Christ and walking " in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 4), that life will in some way or other bear the marks of *brightness* and *transparency*.

(1) *Brightness.* "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father." The light that I have may not be hidden, it is to give light to others. Before it can do this it must be powerful and steady, *powerful* enough to light up all the dark corners of my own heart and to make all works of darkness fly before it; *steady*, no flickering, nor uncertainty about it. Others must be able to see that I have a light which gives me confidence when walking over difficult and dark places, and that I am ready to pass on the light to them. The light must shine brightly within, before it can shine brightly without. It is no use my supposing that I shall have the influence I should have over others if I am deliberately hiding something away from the light, that is if I am permitting knowingly in myself the least infidelity to grace; for this would be to allow the light that is in me to be darkness in this one particular, and if I thus tamper with my light it will be so much the less good to others. This thought will give me matter for reflexion with regard to my apostolate. What I *am* matters so much more than what I *say*. If I never say anything at all, but am always letting the light shine within me and am ever turning it on more brightly by receiving gladly all the inspirations of grace, my light will shine before men—I cannot hinder it.

(2) *Transparency.* The light *must* be good because it is the *Lumen Christi*; it is not mine at all, but the light He gives me—His own light. If then there is only a very poor light to shine before men or none at all, it is my fault, for I am preventing it from shining. It is not the light but the transmission of it that is at fault. I can only show a brilliant light to others if I am transparent. The *Lumen Christi* has to shine *through* me. No fogs or mists or vapours of earth must dim the vessel which contains the light. JESUS wants to live His life in the world through me. He wants me to show Him to others. How can this be, if when others look at me there are things which prevent them from seeing JESUS! How careful I must

be to be simple, open, transparent, a vessel " meet for the Master's use "—a vessel kept so bright and clear and pure by the light within that the light cannot but shine through it. If I am to develop this spiritual clarity I must be *self-less*, living only for Him Who lives in me, my one object in life being to make Him known, so that it is no longer I that live but Christ Who liveth in me. I can do all this by means of the light that is in me. Though it is only a little spark at Baptism, I can tend and develop it till it shines " more and more unto the perfect day." It is the light within me which enables me to have a clear vision, to see things from God's point of view, to pierce through the clouds and mists of earth to the clear atmosphere of the supernatural life, to enter into God's secrets and live the life hid with Christ. And—another paradox—the more my life is a hidden life, the more it will " shine before men ! " And in proportion to the development of my light here on earth will be the glory of my soul in heaven, and the consequent clarity of my resurrection body. *Stella enim a stella differt in claritate.* Star differeth from star in clarity.

Colloquy with the Sun of Justice asking Him for grace to remember His words—(1) " I am the Light of the world." (St. John viii. 12) (2) " You are the light of the world." (St. Matt. v. 14)

Resolution. To think so much of the light within me to-day that I become transparent.

Spiritual Bouquet. " It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory," (1 Cor. xv. 43) *configuratum corpori claritatis suae* —" made like to the body of His glory." (Phil. iii. 21.)

Regina Coeli (1)

Thursday after fourth Sunday.

Regina Coeli, laetare. Alleluia. (*Queen of Heaven, rejoice. Alleluia*).

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Causa nostrae laetitiae, ora pro nobis. (*Cause of our joy, pray for us*).

1*st Prelude.* At Mary's side.
2*nd Prelude.* Grace to rejoice.

Point I.—Queen of Heaven

We have been thinking of Heaven and of what the life of those who attain to the Resurrection of the Just will be like. Now, before our Easter Meditations are quite over, we are going to spend a little time thinking of the joy of the Queen of Heaven, of her who is the cause of all our Easter joy, the Mother of Christ and our Mother, and ask her once more to pray for us.

Mary is saying her endless *Alleluias* now in Heaven because she always said them on earth. She is Queen of Heaven, of angels and of men because she fulfilled her end perfectly on earth, by a perfect praise, a perfect reverence and a perfect service. She never received a single inspiration of grace without using it; this was why God could trust her to be the Mother of His Son and to be the Queen of His Kingdom; and He will trust me in proportion to my fidelity to grace.

What about my inspirations of grace? Do I listen for them, do I use them? Is my attitude that of little Samuel of old "Speak Lord for Thy servant heareth"? It is certain that every day, every hour of my active, waking life, almost with

every breath that I draw, there is an inspiration of grace waiting for me.

In Mary's pure soul there was nothing to hinder a perfect response to all these. In me, alas, there is much to hinder grace from doing its perfect work ! But one of the results of my Easter Meditations will surely be that with Mary's help, I shall try henceforth never *deliberately* to reject an inspiration of grace ; and if this is so, all my spiritual senses will gradually become keener, more subtle, more agile, and I shall recognize God's directing Hand where I should never have suspected it before ; my conscience will become more and more tender ; the little spark will become a shining light, " shining more and more unto the perfect day " ; the spiritual life will be developed and the old life left to die. All this will be effected by correspondence to the grace given, and this correspondence is chiefly in *little things* ; the big ones will take care of themselves as a rule and are not nearly so hard to deal with. It is the patient perseverance in the little duties of my everyday life—things which no one would know anything about if I missed them, which is the real test of whether or not I am corresponding to grace. It is this correspondence which makes life one continual martyrdom because it means a continual crushing of self and its desires. Little acts of mortification and self-sacrifice ; the stifling of a critical thought or unkind judgment ; the getting up at once when the morning call comes ; the withholding of sarcastic or unkind words ; the determined effort to be charitable—to say a good word or find an excuse (and it is always possible) for the absent one who is being discussed or picked to pieces ; the bearing of interruptions not with the resignation of a martyr, but cheerfully and pleasantly as fresh calls from the Master ; the keeping on in spite of fatigue and disinclination, such are the little things which prove whether or not I am faithful to the inspirations of grace. It was because of fidelity to grace that Mary was always " full of grace " on earth and that she is now

Queen of Heaven, of Angels and of all Saints, for her glory—the result of her grace—surpasses that of all other created beings.

O Mary, my Queen and my Mother, if I am ever to be a star in the firmament where thou dost shine so brightly, if I am ever to be a subject, however humble, in thy Kingdom, I must be persuaded of the importance of fidelity to grace. Help me, O Mother of divine grace, through whom all my grace comes, to follow in thy steps.

Point II.—Rejoice. Alleluia

In the Easter Anthem the Church makes us call upon the Queen of Heaven to rejoice; she would have our attention drawn to Mary's joy, for what the Mother is doing the children must do too. She is the "*Cause* of our joy," and it is only natural that we should look to her as our example and try to find out what was the cause of *her* joy. She is the "Cause of our joy" and will be the cause of it through all eternity, because it was through her that our Redemption came, because she will ever be showing unto us the Blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus, because she gave us the Incarnate God from Whom the divine life, upon which all our happiness here and hereafter depends, passes to us. To stand as she does between God and man, the Handmaid of God and the Mother of men, must indeed be a source of intense joy to Mary; to know that as she is the Mother of divine grace, the grace must pass through her to all those whom her Son makes fellow-heirs with Himself, what a joy! To know that she was the one woman picked out by God to be the Mother of His Son, the one chosen to be Queen of Angels and of Men, to know that through all eternity all generations will call her Blessed, what joy! How many causes there were for Mary's joy! And yet none of these were the *real* cause. Had none of

these existed Mary could still have rejoiced in God her Saviour and the Church could still have bidden us say : *Regina Coeli, laetare* ! We must go deeper down to find the real cause of Mary's joy. Where shall we find it ? In her *union* with God, in her *confidence* in Him and in her *humility* from which the union and confidence sprang ; and in these I can try to copy her.

How did Mary rejoice ? By saying always under all circumstances : *Fiat*, Be it to me according to Thy word. Directly there is submission to God's will there is joy in the heart. The next word after *Fiat* is generally *Alleluia*. If we cannot rise to the *Alleluia* it is because we have not sunk down low enough for the *Fiat*. We cannot build high unless the foundations are deep—to say *Fiat* perfectly means that self is eliminated. This will explain why Mary could always say : *Alleluia*. Our poor attempts to say : *Fiat*, leave us often hardly able to look up, much less to sing *Alleluia !* Mary could say with her Divine Son : I *delight* to do Thy Will, not because it was easy, not because in itself it was joyous—on the contrary it was often grievous, but because it was God's Will, sweeter and more precious to her than anything else, and it brought her a joy that nothing could take away. Such was her *union* with God : she had no will but His.

When did Mary rejoice ? Always. Because of her perfect *confidence* in God she knew that all was right, all was well, all was ordered in love and wisdom. She is the Mother of Sorrows, but she is the Mother of joy too, because she looked beyond, she saw the work of Redemption finished and her Son's soul satisfied, for her it was always Easter.

Why did Mary rejoice ? Because her *humility* made her look at everything from God's point of view. She had no will apart from His, no secret judgments of her own about His ways and methods of dealing with her. Thou has *considered* the lowliness of Thy Handmaid, Thou has done great things

for me, my soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit doth *rejoice* in God my Saviour.

Point III.—How, When and Why May I Rejoice

How? There is only one way of rejoicing really in this valley of tears and that is "in God my Saviour." It is by virtue of my union with Him that I can rejoice. It is His life in me that is the joyous life. There is nothing in the old life that can give this joy; but the new life, the life of grace, the life "hid with Christ in God," the Christ-life is an endless source of joy. The more closely I am united to Him, the more joy, supernatural joy, there will be in my life. This new life of grace had always a perfect possession of Mary's soul, she was always, "*full* of grace," and so she could always rejoice. My joy can only come in the same way, and in proportion to my union with Christ will be my joy. *How* can I rejoice? What is going to have the power of giving me joy when I am surrounded with so much trouble and everything is marked with the cross? The knowledge that I am one with Christ, that my life is bound up with His, that I am one of His brethren, a fellow-heir with Him, a child of His Father, redeemed with His own Blood and so precious that not a hair of my head shall perish. It is by *faith* that I must rejoice, a deep and real faith in my union with Christ and a continual striving by my fidelity to grace to increase that union. "Faith can sing through days of sorrow."

When may I rejoice? As Mary did—always. The only thing that can prevent supernatural joy is a want of confidence. When I am sure that however black things look, all is well because God is behind them, there *must* be joy underlying all the pain and sorrow. Joy filled Mary's heart when there was no room for them at Bethlehem, it filled her heart during the flight into Egypt, and even on Calvary, because her

confidence made her regard all these as means to an end. Her joy at Easter was the outcome of her persistent joy during her times of sorrow. "Rejoice in the Lord *always*," is St. Paul's advice, and it is not impossible. It means, however, complete self-mastery, for often a smile must be on the countenance and a bright cheery word on the lips when sorrow and distress are surging within. To rejoice always in this vale of tears is a wholly supernatural accomplishment.

Why may I rejoice? Because "the sufferings of this time (of grace) are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come." (Rom. viii. 18) We are God's adopted children and heirs to His Kingdom; His own divine life floods our souls, and by the Sacrament of His love, courses through our veins too and preserves both soul and body to life everlasting. We are the children of His own Mother and when we say our glad Easter anthem: Rejoice O Queen of Heaven, Alleluia, we know that we may rejoice too, because we are her children.

Colloquy with the Queen of Heaven asking her to help me to rejoice always.

Resolution. To say: *Fiat—Alleluia* to everything that happens to me to-day.

Spiritual Bouquet. Regina Coeli, laetare. Alleluia.

Regina Coeli (2)

Friday after fourth Sunday.

Quia quem meruisti portare resurrexit sicut dixit. Alleluia.

(Because He Whom thou wast worthy to carry has risen again as He said. Alleluia.)

1*st Prelude.* At Mary's side.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to be a Christopher.

Point I.—How did Mary Carry Him and How may I ?

(1) During her nine months' thanksgiving after receiving Our Lord on the first Lady Day, she carried Him actually within her. He shared her very life and guided and prompted every thought and impulse within her, and she shared His life and took part in all He was doing. He did His work in the world then, as He has done ever since, in and through Mary. The *Lumen Christi* shone through the vessel that held it, and gave light to a world that " knew Him not." Jesus had no difficulty in expressing Himself through Mary.

I, too, carry Him after my Communions, when for a short time He dwells within me as really as He dwelt within His Mother. He shares my very life, and if I will, my every voluntary thought and accepted impulse may be His. If I do not hinder it, a mutual assimilation is going on, " bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor. x. 5) till " it is no longer I that live but Christ Who liveth in me," doing His work in the world through me. This is what He wants as the result of my Communions. Is it what He receives ? Does He find it easy to express Himself through me, easy to let the *Lumen Christi* shine through me ? If I am conscious that it is not so, and that I am putting difficulties

in His way, let me ask His Mother who carried Him so perfectly to teach me how to do the same, to teach me to have such an entire union of heart and will with her Son that I shall be able to work for Him and with Him in the world.

(2) How often Mary had her Son in her arms, nursing and tending Him, soothing, comforting, sympathizing, sharing and so *bearing* the troubles of Him Who " bore our infirmities and carried our sorrows." (Isaias liii. 4.) I, in my measure, may do the same ; I may nurse and tend Christ's *mystical* body, by sharing its griefs and carrying its sorrows ; and after each lift along the road that I give to tired and weary, sin-stricken and discouraged souls, I may hear His voice saying " As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me."

" Bear ye one another's burdens and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 2.) It is not only the griefs and troubles of others that Christ expects us to bear with them and for them, but also their weaknesses and faults, bad temper, impatience, want of tact, of kindness, of charity ; their helplessness, incapacity, sickness—all these are burdens for them to carry, and if I , by my patience and charity and unselfishness, share their burdens, putting up with them for Christ's sake, it will be a great means of sanctification to myself. St. Christopher's burden was so heavy that he could scarcely struggle through the flood, and yet It sanctified his whole life, because his burden was Christ Himself ; and I must have faith enough to see Christ in my brother if I am to have charity enough to bear with him. He has identified Himself with His brethren, and all the burdens we bear for others in the spirit of faith, will turn out in the end to have been borne for Him. The struggle through the flood may nearly overwhelm us, but on the other side we shall meet His smile of approval and welcome, as He says : " It is I ! " " Well done good and faithful servant ! "

But the picture has another side, and a humiliating one. If it is true that I have to bear with others, it is no less true that they have to bear with me ! *I* am a burden to someone ; about *me* it is said : Oh! The only thing to be done is to be patient.—The remembrance of this will help me greatly to be patient with others ; and for my consolation I may remember that even Christ was a burden to His Mother. During the flight into Egypt her arms must often have ached with His weight ; He was too heavy for her, and yet what consolation the bearing of that precious burden brought her ! I may try, at any rate, to let the burdens which I cannot help inflicting on others, such as sickness or incapacity, bring their consolation as well. " Bear ye one another's burdens and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ "—the law that He fulfilled with His Blessed Mother, for though He was always giving her the heavy burden of the Cross, always adding to her burdens in one way or another, yet He did it in such a way that He lightened them and helped her to carry them.

Point II.—Meruisti

Mary *deserved* to be a Christopher, she was worthy to carry Jesus. Why ? Because of her humility—her nothingness in her estimation of herself. She was always magnifying (making much of) the Lord and rejoicing in Him, not in herself or her own interests, because He took notice of her lowliness. She praised and blessed Him continually for the great things He had done to her, for His holiness, His mercy and His power, for His goodness to the humble and the poor. She was never occupied with herself but always with Him ; that was why God could trust her to be the first Christopher, to carry His Son and to show Him to others. Mary was nothing in her own estimation, therefore she was no hindrance to the *Lumen Christi* shining through her. There was nothing in her to come

between her Son and those whom He had come to help and save. It was just her nothingness that was such a help—because it left Christ to do all. Such are those whom He wants to be Christophers ; those who are quite persuaded that they are nothing, that they can do nothing, that all they want is to carry Him, to show Him to others, to let *His* light shine through them, to belong to Him, to be used by Him, to be chosen by Him, " Fear not thou worm, *thou art mine.*" (Is. xli. 14, xliii. 1.) There is the strength. He Whom we carry *possesses* us, it is because we belong to Him, and are partakers of His nature that we deserve to carry Him. We have no deserts of our own, only those which He has given us. " All (things) are yours and you are Christ's." (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) Let us then rejoice if we are counted worthy to do the least little thing for Him Who has done everything for us.

Point III.—Resurrexit sicut dixit

" Rejoice because He Whom thou wast worthy to carry has risen as He said." This is why we are bidden to call on Mary to rejoice during Paschal tide, because her Son has risen, because His work of Redemption has been crowned—the top-stone has been put upon it.

" *He has risen* "—and by this fact the seal is set to our faith and also to our joy and peace and hope.

" *As he said.*" It is always " as He said." He is always as good as His word. " Remember the word of the Lord Jesus how He said—." (Acts xx. 35.) We can rely on all His promises—" God is not as a man that He should lie. Hath He said then, and will He not do ? Hath He spoken and will He not fulfil ? " (Num. xxiii. 19.) " He is faithful Who hath called you, Who also will do it." (1 Thess. v. 24.) He said : On the third day the Son of Man shall rise again from the dead,

and He did. Shall I not trust Him and hope in Him? He has said many things to me, words of warning, words of consolation, words of reproof, words of encouragement; they are all true, all is and will be through all eternity "as He said."

Alleluia. Praise the Lord. It is the only word that will fit in, the one word left to say. My faith is secure; my joy and peace are certain; God is faithful; every detail of my life is "as He said," as He has planned, as He thinks best; all I have to do is to say: *Alleluia,* that is, to praise Him for each thing as it comes, and so let the Easter joy be ever mine. Anything contrary to this spirit of praise mars the joy and peace at once. If I allow myself to wish things were a little different, to indulge in a criticizing spirit, to be discontented, the *Alleluia* dies out of my heart. Why? Because I am not wanting things to be "as He said." I am criticizing *His* dealings with me and wishing to change them, I am losing my *faith* in Him, and without faith the Easter *Alleluia* is impossible.

O Queen of Heaven whose faith was so perfect that thou couldst always rejoice, help thy child to begin even here in this valley of tears the endless *Alleluia.*

Colloquy with the Queen of Heaven.

Resolution. To say: *Alleluia,* to everything to-day.

Spiritual Bouquet. Alleluia.

Regina Coeli (3)

Saturday after fourth Sunday.

Ora pro nobis Deum. Alleluia. (Pray to God for us. Alleluia.)

1*st Prelude.* At Mary's feet.

2*nd Prelude.* Grace to share our joy with her.

I can understand the " poor banished children " saying their " *Ora pro nobis* " when the earth is to them a " Valley of tears " ; or when they see their Mother standing at the foot of the Cross, the sword piercing her soul while her Son says to her : Woman behold thy children ! It is natural enough that then her ears should be filled with millions of voices crying : *Ora pro nobis*, natural enough that times of sorrow should make the children run to their Mother. It is natural enough too that they should utter the little familiar prayer at the hour of their death, when they feel more than ever the need of their Mother's prayers ; but why *now*, in the midst of all the Easter joy ? Why should it be thrust into the Easter Antiphon? " Rejoice Queen of Heaven, because He, Whom thou wast worthy to bear, has risen again as He said," and then : " Pray to God for us. Alleluia " What has the *Ora pro nobis* got to do with the Easter *Alleluia*, and why does the Church connect the two so closely ? Let us try to find an answer to these questions.

Point I.—Because Easter is a Time of Joy

We cannot leave our Mother out of our joys. Those who think that prayer is only necessary in times of difficulty and

trouble do not understand what prayer is. Prayer is the communing of heart with heart, the sharing of interests, "the lifting up of the heart and mind to God," thinking about Him and loving Him, in all that concerns us. Who is the first person to whom a child runs to tell its little joys—yea even quicker than its sorrows, these it will tell to anyone who will sympathize, but the *joys*—! I must show this or tell this to Mother,—are its first words. Mary is our Mother and the Church knows that at Easter, the time of our greatest joy, we shall want to go to her and tell her of our joy and share it with her. And so we run to her just because we are so happy, and say: "Rejoice Queen of Heaven!" and then we tell her why we are so happy—we say it all over again, as if she did not know! Just like little children! And then most naturally we end by saying: "Pray to God for us." Do not forget your children. You are Queen of Heaven and *your* joy is very great, but you are our Mother and so we come to let you see how happy we are and to ask your prayers. It is impossible for us to tell her anything without the old familiar words rising to our hearts and lips: *Ora pro nobis*, and they are never out of place. So one reason why the Church bids us talk to our Mother now and share our *Alleluias* with her, is just because it *is* a time of joy and we have need of a Mother's loving watchful care in our time of joy as much as, and perhaps more than, in our times of sorrow. Let us learn, then to share all our joys with our Mother; it will be safer for us as we shall see in our next point.

Point II.—Because we want Her to Teach us how to Rejoice

Because we are her children we shall try to do as she does; children always love to copy their mother. *How* did Mary rejoice? She answers for herself. "My spirit hath rejoiced

in God my Saviour." Her joy was *in* Him, *because* of Him and all He had done for her, *for His sake*, because He loved to see her singing *Alleluia* after each *Fiat*. Her joys were all intimately connected with her Son. The children notice this, and in their glad Easter anthem, they let her know that they have noticed it : " Rejoice because He Whom thou wast worthy to bear has risen as He said." They know it is useless to ask her to rejoice on any other ground, her interests are all bound up with those of her Son.

And now her children want to copy her, they want to rejoice *as* she does. We said that the little one wants to copy its mother ; it tries, and what seemed to it so easy when its mother was doing it, now seems impossible ! What is the next thing ? Show *me* how to do it, Mother, it pleads. So it is with Mary's children. They want to rejoice as she does, it looks easy, but it is not in reality and so they say : *Ora pro nobis.* Pray for us that we may be able to rejoice as you do—always in and through and because of JESUS.

Times of joy and consolation are not the safest times for the children. They are a little apt to get independent then and to think that they have no need of their Mother, that they are old enough to do without her, that she cannot enter into all their joys now. The Church knew well the danger and so she bids her children, especially in their joy, go to their Mother and say : *Ora pro nobis.* They need their Mother's prayers then very specially. They are so apt to become frivolous and careless and forgetful and independent, so apt to enjoy the consolation for its own sake and to forget that it is *in the Lord* that they must rejoice. So they come to their Mother and ask to be kept very little and humble and dependent in their times of joy.

But there is a third reason why the Church bids us ask for Mary's prayers during our Easter joy :

Point III.—Because She is the Cause of Our Joy

When the child realizes that all its joy and happiness come to it through its mother, that but for her it would have been as miserable as the poor, little motherless children, does it not run to its mother all the quicker to thank her and to show her its love and appreciation. It is only because the elder children so often do *not* realize, that they become independent. Do *I* realize that all comes to me through Mary, that she is indeed the *Causa nostrae laetitiae*, that but for the Mother of God there could have been no Incarnation, no Easter and no Sacraments ? It is when I realize this that I shall be really anxious to share my joys with her, that I shall feel that the first thing to be done in times of joy and consolation is to run to the Mother through whom I know all has come and to thank her. I may not be very clear about how everything works in, any more than the little child knows exactly how its mother manages to give it so many little pleasures ; but I *do* know that the Incarnation has everything to do with Easter, and I do know that if I take Mary out of the Incarnation there would be *nothing* left. Is she not truly the cause of all our joy ? Her *Fiat* is still ringing in our ears as we sing our *Regina Coeli* ; and as we run over all the wonderful story once again in our minds, we cannot help saying : O Queen of Heaven, Mother of God and our Mother, pray to God for us.

Joy " in the Lord " is always better for our spiritual life than sorrow. " Because I rejoice in Thy ways, I *run* in Thy commandments." Let one result of our Easter Meditations be that we cultivate a joyous spirit. Those who live nearest to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother are always the happiest. Those who have the heaviest crosses often have the lightest spirits. Let us commend our religion by the genuine happiness with which we go through life. The fruits of the spirit are first *joy*. It is the Easter fruit promised and given by Our Lord Himself : " I will see you again and your heart shall

rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John xvi. 22.) Now that He *has* seen us again and *has* given this precious gift, let us be proud of it and show it to everyone, and not hide it under a bushel as though we were ashamed of it or afraid of losing it, in spite of His assurance that no man can rob us of it !

Colloquy with Our Lady. O Queen of Heaven sitting at the Right Hand of thy Son in eternal joy pray for me that I may so pass through the troubles and joys of this life that " fulness of joy for evermore " may be mine.

Resolution. To remember in my times of joy that my Mother is praying for me in Heaven.

Spiritual Bouquet. Ora pro nobis, Deum. Alleluia.

THE END.

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